"INDEPENDENCE PLUS": NEW ZEALAND AND THE COMMONWEALTH 1945-1950

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts in History
in the
University of Canterbury
by
Peter J. Lund

University of Canterbury
1985

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines New Zealand's role in and contribution to the British Commonwealth in the crucial years immediately following the Second World War. A thematic approach is taken, highlighting economic, constitutional and defence ties, as well as the less discernable links of sentiment. The premise is that the Commonwealth was essentially a paradoxical association; the juncture between independent nationhood and collective solidarity. The thesis, therefore, aims to show how New Zealand exhibited both these traits and tried to maintain some equilibrium between them. However, the latter role of the loyal Commonwealth partner increasingly prevailed in the difficult international situation of the late 1940's. Certainly, by the defeat of the first Labour government in 1949, New Zealand had strongly reaffirmed its commitment to Commonwealth unity. Confirmed sovereignty was qualified by a residual imperial focus. The various influences contributing to New Zealand's inherent support for the Commonwealth will be considered.

New Zealand's commitment to the Commonwealth has to, however, be seen in the context of a changing international environment. The established independence of member states, combined with Britain's

decline as a major power, ensured that the Commonwealth could not function as a unitary bloc. A bi-polar balance of power, centred on the United States and the Soviet Union was to become the predominant feature of the post-war world, and Commonwealth members had to respond accordingly. In turn, the Commonwealth itself was an elastic association and continued to evolve relative to changing circumstances, as highlighted by the impact of the independence of the Indian subcontinent. This gave greater emphasis to the Commonwealth's basis as a free association of independent nations rather than a formalised alliance. The New Zealand government's conservative, even reactionary, attitude to such developments will be discussed, showing Wellington's role as the advocate of the "Old Commonwealth".

The External Affairs files of the National Archives, Wellington, provided the bulk of primary research. This was supplemented by parliamentary records, newspapers and the excellent published collections of primary sources. The extensive corpus of secondary literature also provided valuable background detail. The thematic approach taken may be at the expense of a full chronological overview, but it aims to illustrate the major comparative trends of the period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the production of this thesis:

the residents of 96 Campbell Street, Karori, Wellington, who kindly made room for me from April to July 1984.

the staff of the National Archives, Wellington, particularly Rachel Lilburn, who provided valuable assistance during my three month residence.

my parents, brother, relatives and friends, for their support, encouragement and good humour.

Lola Mahon for her superb typing and keen eye for my mistakes.

I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Professor W.D. McIntyre, for his valued comments on my draft chapters, advice, enthusiasm and patience.

I would like to think that this thesis marks the culmination of a very enjoyable six years at the University of Canterbury.

ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives
BCM	British Commonwealth Meeting, 1945
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Japan)
CAB	Cabinet Papers of the First Labour Government, National Archives, Wellington
CD	Council of Defence
COS	Chiefs of Staff
EA	External Affairs Files, National Archives, Wellington
JCOSA	Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
NZPD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
PMM	Prime Ministers' Meeting
T	Treasury Files, National Archives, Wellington

INTRODUCTION

> I often think that to the outsider the British Commonwealth must surely appear an almost inexplicable freak of nature. We can imagine the bewilderment of an intelligent visitor from another planet on being confronted with its manifest contradictions.
>
> - The Earl of Halifax to the Toronto Board of Trade, 24 January 1944. From Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-52 Vol. I, Nicholas Mansergh (Ed.) (London, 1953), p.575.

The Commonwealth defies a straight-forward definition. Even its name was variable - the terms British Commonwealth, Commonwealth of Nations and British Empire were all in concurrent usage in the post-war period, highlighting a unique flexibility and complexity. Rather than an organic entity, the Commonwealth was a voluntary association of independent nations, that had gradually evolved out of colonialism. Elastic rather than formalised, it had developed relative to the needs of its members. Consequently, there was no such thing as a unitary Commonwealth policy, only the willingness of members to seek consensus and agreement. The basis of the Commonwealth was, therefore, essentially paradoxical, a balance of the seemingly conflicting ideals of independence and interdependence, sovereignty and solidarity.

As independent nations, members were able to define the Commonwealth in their own terms. For example, in 1949 New Zealand's perception of the Commonwealth sharply differed from that of India, but the very nature of the association meant that both views could be accommodated. This was at the expense of uniform obligations and commitments. Functional rather than logical, the Commonwealth was a distinctly British creation. As an American broadcaster remarked in 1943:

> People can be pardoned for not understanding the structure of the British Commonwealth, because it is a thing without precedent, and without parallel. One can say more, it is distinctly abstruse and unless one can find his way about in the British thinking as to constitutionalism, it remains baffling.[1]

Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand achieved independence by a gradual constitutional process rather than an explicit surrender of imperial authority. The Balfour Report thus defined Dominion status as it had emerged by 1926:

> autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.[2]

However, certain technical restrictions remained on the sovereignty of Dominion parliaments. The Statute of Westminster, 1931, removed these limitations, though New Zealand did not adopt this legislation until 1947.

---

[1] Raymond Gram Swing, 26 October 1943. Written transcript of radio broadcast, EA 159/1/5, pt.2.

[2] Quoted N. Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience (London, 1969), p.232.

By 1945 the practical and theoretical sovereignty of Commonwealth members was an established fact. The Second World War showed that while the Dominions supported Britain, they did so as sovereign nations, pursuing their own policies. A paper by the New Zealand External Affairs Department in 1947 recognised that "the policy of each member is based largely on its conception of its own interests."[3] Consequently, there was strong opposition (though not from New Zealand) to proposals for the establishment of centralised machinery to facilitate Commonwealth interchange.

However, independence was tempered by an unwritten commitment to consultation and co-operation, as evident in foreign policy, defence, economics and constitutional matters. Commonwealth ties were primarily a series of bilateral relations between individual Dominions and Britain, though broader contacts also occurred. Rather than infringe on national sovereignty, this system of familial diplomacy allowed governments to freely exchange views and information. Ongoing consultation between governments thus provided the essential practical feature of the Commonwealth relationship, aptly described by the Canadian Prime Minister, W.L. MacKenzie King, in 1944 as "a continuing conference of the cabinets of the

---

[3] 'Dominion Status and Independence within the Commonwealth', 19 May 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7.

Commonwealth."[4] Consultation was not always conclusive, as evidenced by some of Britain's arbitrary actions in wartime, but was very extensive.

Close and effective inter-Commonwealth co-operation was achieved in the Second World War and was maintained in peacetime. The apex of this system were Prime Ministers' Meetings, which had replaced the more formal and outdated Imperial Conferences during the war. Such meetings were held in 1946, 1948 and 1949, supplemented by other ministerial meetings. These were fairly informal get-togethers, providing valuable personal exchanges rather than official decisions. In turn, the bulk of Commonwealth consultation took the form of continuous flows of telegrams and communiques between capitals. The scale of this correspondence was high. For example, between 1937 and 1947, the number of circular telegrams and written communications sent from the Commonwealth Relations Office to other governments increased by eleven and four times, respectively.[5]

The high level of post-war inter-Commonwealth consultation reflected the many important developments in the international environment. The Second World War marked a watershed for the Commonwealth and the aftermath saw a period of significant transition. Primarily, this related to Britain's decline as a major

---

[4]Extract from address to British Parliament, 11 May 1944, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-52, Vol. I, N. Mansergh (Ed.) (London, 1953) p.587.

[5]PMM(48) Minutes of 8th Meeting 18 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

economic and military power. Britain's deficiencies were already evident before the war, but had now become dramatically heightened. The Dominions were, consequently, required to take increased responsibilities, which corresponded with their established status as independent nations. The post-war Commonwealth was clearly not a self-sufficient bloc, but was increasingly dependent on the economic and military power of the United States. Further, the structure of the Commonwealth was also significantly changed by the independence of the Indian subcontinent. The addition of new Asian members, more inclined towards non-alignment and republicanism, marked the end of the "Old Commonwealth", an intimate family of predominantly European, English speaking countries. However, the basis of the Commonwealth as a free association of sovereign nations was unaffected, even strengthened, by such developments.

Post-war New Zealand aptly illustrated the essential paradox of Commonwealth membership. While the Statute of Westminster was not adopted until 1947, thereby confirming New Zealand's sovereignty, the government espoused a distinctly independent foreign policy, vigorously supporting wider international co-operation. Both the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Walter Nash, enjoyed a high international profile. However, New Zealand was also a devoted member of the Commonwealth, strongly supporting its continued solidarity. New Zealand's

identity remained essentially British: Britain provided New Zealand with its King, the ethnic origin of most of its people, its major export market and international focus. A real sense of commitment to the Mother Country and to Commonwealth unity was manifestly evident in the difficult post-war years, and there was strong opposition to any perceived weakening of these ties. Here, then, was the paradox of independence and interdependence, a fact recognised by Fraser in a telegram to the Australian Minister of External Affairs in 1947:

> ... there comes a point where we have to decide how far we can have it both ways; how far we can reconcile our status as independent nations with joint Commonwealth action.[6]

Commonwealth membership did, indeed, seem to allow members to "have it both ways"; or, as Fraser also expressed it, "independence with something added."[7]

---

[6]Fraser to Evatt, 23 April 1947, EA 102/9/3, pt.1.

[7]Statement by Fraser, 3 June 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7.

CHAPTER I

POST-WAR IDEALS AND REALITIES

> I believe that the war has created for us a revolution which we have not yet appreciated ... We must recognise the fact that Britain is not a Power in the East or in the Pacific today ... That is not a reason why we should break allegiance with the Commonwealth, but it is a reason that we must think again about our position in the world. Today we cannot hide behind our mother's skirts.
>
> - Ormond Wilson NZPD, 8 July 1947, Vol. 276, pp.298-99.

New Zealand entered the post-war world with an interesting dual identity. On one hand, its status as an independent nation was confirmed and extended, with the government following its own foreign policy and vigorously supporting the internationalism of the United Nations. This was the "post-Statute of Westminster era", with Dominion independence an established fact (although New Zealand did not formally legislate on this until 1947). Furthermore, the war had irrevocably changed the Commonwealth. Britain was severely weakened, unable to maintain the same extensive defence commitments, especially in the South Pacific, where it was no longer the effective guarantor of New Zealand's security. Consequently, the Dominions had to take increased responsibility for their own defence, further advancing their independent status. In New Zealand's case, this involved increased regional co-operation with Australia

and recognition of the need to come to some regional understanding with the United States, the great Pacific power.

Yet, concurrently, New Zealand was ardently Anglophile and a devoted member of the British Commonwealth, strongly supporting its continued solidarity. In fact, Britain's post-war problems only served to heighten emotional and economic ties with the Mother Country. This was certainly a curious paradox, although the New Zealand government did not see a contradiction here. After all, the Commonwealth had evolved as a free association of independent states united by allegiance to the Crown and a willingness to consult and co-operate, not by unitary policy. Independence and inter-dependence thus co-existed in an apparent symbiosis, the ideal model, in Peter Fraser's view, for contemporary international relations.[1] On his return from the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting, he duly expressed the special Commonwealth relationship:

> Here is a paradox the world outside the British Commonwealth finds it difficult to understand - the paradox that, the freer we become, the closer we draw together; the more our constitutional bonds are relaxed, the more closely we are held in the bonds of friendship; the greater the extent to which governmental sovereignty is extended ... the more truly are we one in sentiment, in heart and spirit, one in peace as well as one in war.[2]

Inevitably, there was some conflict between Commonwealth loyalty and an independent foreign policy (as the Labour

---

[1] Fraser commended the example of the Commonwealth to the United Nations Charter Conference at San Francisco, June 1945.

[2] Statement by Fraser in House of Representatives, 7 August 1944, New Zealand Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents 1943-57, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (Wellington, 1972), pp.77-78.

government had found in the pre-war years). Wellington tried to balance these two factors, though the former was to prove the more predominant.

Certainly, New Zealand emerged from the Second World War with immense pride in the achievement of the British Commonwealth. The war had heightened Commonwealth unity in military and economic terms and accentuated New Zealand's bond with the Crown and Mother Country. Fraser aptly represented the feelings of the nation when reading Parliament's message to King George VI after the final victory over Japan, 14 August 1945:

> We would express our gratitude to Your Majesty who throughout the years of the war kept us ever conscious of that union of hearts and purposes which links your peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire, and which made our joint efforts the willing co-operation of a firm brotherhood determined to uphold the right and to defend our common heritage.[3]

New Zealand hoped that wartime solidarity would carry over into peace. Thus, at the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meetings, Fraser had supported Australian proposals to strengthen the established methods of Commonwealth consultation, particularly in defence. Fraser circulated proposals for a revived Committee of Imperial Defence, co-ordinating the resources of member states, ensuring equitable contributions and providing effective contingency planning. While recognising that in the future the might of the United States and an effective world security organisation would be crucial, he reaffirmed:

> at the same time we should realize as effective a development as possible of British power. This can

---

[3] NZPD, 14 August 1945, vol. 269, p.163.

be ensured if there is an adequate understanding and co-ordination in Imperial defence.[4]

This did not mean the subordination of national policy to centralised authority, but reflected Australian and New Zealand desire to effectively represent their interests in a united Commonwealth. Canada and South Africa did not share this enthusiasm for joint policy, which implied for them an infringement of sovereignty. Rather than formal machinery, extensive wartime co-operation had been achieved by constant inter-government communication. This was a flexible and informal system appropriate for a free association of independent nations. Canadian Prime Minister W.L. MacKenzie King aptly summarised this system, when addressing the British Parliament at the time of the meetings, as "a continuing conference of the cabinets of the Commonwealth".[5]

Despite New Zealand's commitment to the Commonwealth, the harsh reality of changes brought by the war had to be faced. The imperial defence strategy in the Pacific had dramatically collapsed in 1941 in the wake of Japan's onslaught. In response, New Zealand had to turn to the United States for security (a contingency British planning had, in fact, envisaged), while Commonwealth defence was absorbed into the wider structure of allied strategy. Clearly, the Commonwealth could no longer be considered a self-sufficient bloc, especially in the South Pacific. The war had left the United Kingdom irrevocably weakened,

---

[4] PMM (44) British Commonwealth Defence Co-operation: Note by PM. of New Zealand Annex II Minutes of 14th meeting, 15 May 1944 EA. 156/10/1 pt. 1.

[5] Extract from address to both Houses of the United

no longer a pre-eminent military or economic power. As a result, the continued support of the Dominions was important in buttressing Britain's claim to major power status.[6] Australia and New Zealand, by lobbying for closer inter-Commonwealth defence planning, also reflected concern at the changed balance of power, hoping that increased unity here would compensate for Britain's diminished position. Britain's imperial authority was also undermined by the imminent independence of the Indian subcontinent and a weakened colonial position in South-East Asia - a consequence of Japan's wartime advance and rising nationalism.

The relative decline of Britain's power led also to an increased devolution of responsibility to the Dominions in regional defence and foreign policy. Australia and New Zealand pre-empted this with the signing of the "Canberra Pact" in January 1944. This bi-lateral agreement, initiated independently of the United Kingdom, reflected the desire of the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Herbert Evatt, for an Anzac led "British sphere of influence in the South-west and South Pacific" and the desire to ensure that the two nations asserted their rightful voice

---

Kingdom parliament 11 May 1944. Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-52 Vol. I, N. Mansergh (ed. (London, 1953), p.587.

[6]Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador to Washington, speaking personally in Toronto 24 January 1944 voiced the opinion that "In the company of these Titans (the United States and Soviet Union), Britain, apart from the rest of the Commonwealth and Empire, could hardly claim equal partnership." Mansergh, Documents I, p.579.

in post-war developments there.[7] In practical terms, the intention of Australia and New Zealand assuming responsibility for a regional zone of defence based on their metropolitan and island territory,[8] was overly ambitious given their resources. However, symbolically, the agreement was a forward-looking expression of New Zealand's independent role in the post-war world. As a contemporary New Zealand commentator stated, it illustrated a "healthy Pacific mindedness".[9] Significantly, the British government welcomed the agreement as a positive example of inter-Commonwealth co-operation, helping to alleviate its strained position.[10]

Clearly, the war had advanced New Zealand's status as an independent nation. The strenuous war effort (while in the context of Commonwealth unity) greatly increased national self-esteem.[11] In particular, the exploits of the New Zealand Division, which functioned as the expeditionary

---

[7] High Commissioner for New Zealand to Minister of External Affairs 21 October 1943 after discussions with Australian Minister of External Affairs Herbert Evatt, The Australian-New Zealand Agreement 1944, Robin Kay (ed.) (Wellington, 1972), p.47. Evatt's strong personality ensured Australian dominance of this issue, with New Zealand playing more of a moderating influence. Evatt even suggested the desirability of Britain transferring her South Pacific colonies to Australia and New Zealand.

[8] Text of full Agreement in Kay, pp.140-148.

[9] L. Lipson, 'A Foreign Policy for New Zealand', New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster, J.C. Beaglehole (ed.) (Wellington, 1944), p.150.

[10] F.L.W. Wood, The New Zealand People at War (Wellington, 1958), p.317.

[11] With a population approximating 1,632,000 in 1939, 205,000 people had joined the armed forces, with 135,000 serving overseas. In economic terms 3,110,000 tons of meat, butter and cheese were exported to the United Kingdom - J. Thorn, Peter Fraser (London, 1952), pp.227-228.

force of a sovereign state, highlighted New Zealand's specific identity. As General Freyberg wrote: "We are in the position of an ally, a very close one ... but we are not part of the British army ... All major decisions, such as the employment of the force, are made by the New Zealand War Cabinet."[12] Wellington strongly maintained its own interests during the war and felt no inferiority. Certainly, New Zealand was exposed to an unprecedented level of international involvement, and was represented at numerous allied conferences and discussions, which carried over into the post-war period. In fact, there were 21 such events in 1946 alone.[13] Fraser particularly relished international relations, travelling widely during the war and establishing a reputation as a notable statesman.[14] As a result of New Zealand's increased international responsibilities in wartime, the External Affairs Department was established in 1943 and missions were set up in Washington, Ottawa, Canberra and Moscow.[15] The scope of New Zealand's external interests had certainly advanced from the once all-encompassing relationship with the United Kingdom.

I. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

An independent foreign policy was particularly manifest in the government's concern for the achievement of an effective post-war international order. In the years

---

[12] Quoted Wood, The New Zealand People at War, p.102.

[13] Keith Sinclair, Walter Nash (Auckland, 1976), p.237.

[14] A.D. McIntosh, 'Working with Peter Fraser in Wartime: Personal Reminiscences', The New Zealand Journal of History vol. 10, No. 1 April 1976, pp.3, 19.

preceding World War II, the Labour Government adamantly upheld the principles of collective security at the League of Nations, often conflicting with the United Kingdom. Despite the League's failure, New Zealand remained committed to its principles and hoped that the thwarted idealism of the 1930's would achieve a post-war fruition. Thus, when the Moscow Declaration of the great powers (October 1943) announced the intention to create a new international organisation, New Zealand and Australia were prompted to assert in the Canberra Pact their desire to play an equitable role in its planning and establishment.[16] However, it was the great powers - the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and, nominally, China - that formalised the draft proposals at Dumbarton Oaks, August to October 1944. While Britain consulted with Dominion representatives in Washington (including the New Zealand Minister Carl Berendsen) during the discussions and made available the British draft memorandum, the Dominions had little influence. Britain essentially represented its own interests as a major power.[17]

---

[15] A previous External Affairs Department was created in 1919 to administer the League mandate of Western Samoa and was transformed into the new Department of Island Territories. The small External Affairs Department was closely inter-related with the Prime Minister's Department, in effect the Imperial Affairs Section of the Prime Minister's Department was simply extended.

[16] Clause 14 of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement in Kay, p.142.

[17] W.D. McIntyre, 'Peter Fraser's Commonwealth', New Zealand in World Affairs (Wellington, 1977), p.48.

The New Zealand government was not satisfied with the resulting proposals, which seemed to serve the interests of the sponsoring powers and not the majority of the international community - the smaller nations. As in 1936 when the Savage government presented its memorandum for improving the League of Nations Covenant, Wellington was quite prepared to express views contrary to London. At a meeting with the British delegates to Dumbarton Oaks in Washington 16 August 1944, Berendsen strongly voiced the perceived deficiencies in the British proposals. There was no definite commitment to universal collective security - the automatic application of sanctions against aggressors, nor was there guarantees for the territorial integrity and independence of all members.[18] Berendsen also criticised the disproportionate role allotted to small nations in the General Assembly vis-à-vis the great powers in the Security Council - "a negation in the international field of those principles of democracy for which this war is being fought".[19] New Zealand and Australia publicly expressed these views in resolutions following their Wellington conference in November 1944, the first to be held since the signing of the Canberra Pact.[20] They also proposed the universal application of the principles of trusteeship for all colonial territories. This bi-lateral action caused some consternation in Whitehall, where the etiquette of Commonwealth consultation (particularly in the

---

[18] Ibid., pp.48-49; Wood The New Zealand People at War, pp.324-25.

[19] Quoted Wood, The New Zealand People at War, p.325.

[20] Statements and Documents, pp.80-81.

sensitive matter of trusteeship) was seen to be overlooked.[21] Here was certainly the "small power rampant",[22] not the dutiful dominion.

Before the opening of the United Nations Charter Conference at San Francisco in April 1945, Fraser joined other Commonwealth representatives in London for preliminary discussions of the various issues involved. This was an unprecedented meeting, though delegates were at pains to emphasise it did not represent the "ganging up" of a special bloc within the new international organisation. As the Dominions' Secretary, Lord Cranborne, stated it was possible to be both "a citizen of the world and a member of a family".[23] Consequently, the meeting allowed the Commonwealth governments the opportunity to clarify their policies after extensive prior exchanges. Certainly, the sharp differences between New Zealand and Australia on one hand and Britain on the other ensured there could be no united Commonwealth stance. What had been possible for the British Empire at the League of Nations in 1919 could not be repeated in 1945.

The question of trusteeship in colonial territories received particular attention at the meeting. This system as established for the League of Nations mandates (the confiscated territories of the defeated powers of the First World War), involved the administering power ruling "in trust" for the local inhabitants under the general supervision of the international security organisation, rather than

---

[21] McIntyre, 'Peter Fraser's Commonwealth', p.50.

[22] Title of Chapter 26 in Wood, The New Zealand People at War.

[23] BCM (45) Minutes of first meeting 4 April 1945, Bound volume of Minutes and Memoranda of British Commonwealth Meeting 1945 in National Archives.

exercising sovereignty.[24] The basic objectives of the system involved promoting the welfare of dependent peoples and their social, economic and political development. In the Canberra Pact and the subsequent Wellington conference, Australia and New Zealand had expounded the principles of trusteeship and advocated its application "in broad principle" to all colonial territories in the Pacific and beyond.[25] Fraser and Evatt thus reaffirmed this commitment, proposing the establishment of a special supervisory body with the authority to commission reports, inspect conditions and provide recommendations in all colonial territories.[26] The two governments saw this as a key issue at San Francisco and hoped the rest of the Commonwealth would give support, providing a united voice on the matter.[27]

However, the United Kingdom (the greatest colonial power) did not support the Australasian proposals. In fact, an earlier Colonial Office memorandum had proposed ending the existing mandate system and its supervisory commission, arguing it created a feeling of impermanence and restricted the authority of the administering power.[28] This view had since been reconsidered and the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley, told the meeting that the British government was now prepared to accept the continuation of the mandate

---

[24] Keith Sinclair, Towards Independence (Auckland, 1975), p.12.

[25] Clause 28 of Australian-New Zealand Agreement, Kay, p.144.

[26] BCM (45) Minutes of second meeting, 4 April 1945, Bound volume of Minutes and Memoranda, op. cit.

[27] Peter Fraser, ibid.

[28] 'The International Aspects of Colonial Policy' 27 December 1944, quoted ibid.

system and its extension to newly confiscated enemy territories - with some modifications.[29] But he was adamant that Britain would not bring its established colonies under such a system, thereby making them accountable to an outside body. Furthermore, Whitehall did not want the details of trusteeship discussed at San Francisco,[30] anticipating an anti-colonial policy from most delegations.

Britain's conservative approach did not please the New Zealand and Australian delegations. Fraser was also disturbed that Britain had formulated new trusteeship proposals without consulting its Commonwealth partners (though, ironically, London had previously criticised the two Tasman neighbours for doing the same at the Wellington conference). He emphasised that the value of such meetings would be questioned if decisions were reached before discussions began.[31] Fraser further expressed a failure to understand Britain's objections to trusteeship, somewhat naively claiming that its enlightened colonial administrations would only receive "high honour and respect" if subject to trusteeship scrutiny.[32] It was rather colonial territories where administration and conditions were poor - Fraser highlighted French and Dutch Pacific possessions - that would be shown up. By extending the trusteeship system, he argued, Britain would make a bold, progressive example to the rest of the world. Otherwise, Fraser warned, Britain's policy would appear reactionary, condemning her to the

---

[29] Such as removing restrictions on defence bases.

[30] BCM (45) Minutes of second meeting, 4 April 1945, op. cit.

[31] Ibid.

[32] BCM (45) Minutes of 12th meeting, 13 April 1945, ibid.

company of "predatory colonial powers". While not wanting to cause inter-Commonwealth embarrassment, Fraser emphasised that New Zealand would express its own views on the matter at San Francisco.[33]

The second major issue of discussion at the meeting was the draft for the United Nations Charter. The New Zealand delegation voiced strong criticism to the British government (one of the sponsors), highlighting two major deficiencies. Firstly, Fraser emphasised the excessive authority given to the great powers at the expense of other members. While appreciating that the new organisation's success ultimately depended on the continued co-operation of the major powers, their veto power in the Security Council (as agreed at the Yalta Conference, February 1945 - thereby ensuring great power unanimity of action) was seen as the "utter negation" of the Charter's avowed aim of an effective universal collective security system.[34] This would allow major powers and their surrogates to legitimise aggression and to hinder the resolution of disputes, in effect, holding the international organisation to ransom. In practice, the veto would only prevent aggression by small nations, who would in turn be bound to obey the monopoly voice of the great powers in the Security Council.[35]

In response, New Zealand recommended an enlarged role for smaller nations. Berendsen advocated achieving this by either increasing the representative character of

---

[33] BCM (45) Minutes of 12th meeting,13 April 1945, op. cit.

[34] BCM (45) Minutes of 5th meeting,6 April 1945, ibid.

[35] BCM (45) Minutes of 7th meeting,10 April 1945, ibid.

the Security Council or by referring the enforcement of sanctions to the approval of the General Assembly. This would complicate matters, but New Zealand was adamant that there would be "no shedding of our people's blood without a voice".[36] The British authorities were concerned at New Zealand's stand, noting it was the only Dominion to adamantly oppose the security arrangements (Australia was more conciliatory) and had not expressed objection to the veto when previously consulted.[37] Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden attempted to allay New Zealand fears by clarifying that in Britain's view the veto would not be applied in a wholesale way. In turn, Attlee added that from a realistic viewpoint, the new organisation's ability to maintain peace and prevent aggression ultimately depended, not on idealistic and democratic machinery, but the agreement of the great powers - as the veto recognised.[38] Despite British pressure, Fraser was not prepared to modify his views, maintaining that changes would have to be made at San Francisco.

New Zealand's second contention over the draft was the lack of explicit guarantees for the political independence and territorial integrity of members and the commitment to resist all acts of aggression. Berendsen reminded the meeting that despite the best intentions, the League of Nations had failed. This was because members had

---

[36] BCM (45) Minutes of 7th meeting, 10 April 1945, op. cit.

[37] BCM (45) Minutes of 6th meeting, 9 April 1945, ibid.

[38] BCM (45) Minutes of 6th meeting, 9 April 1945, ibid.

lacked the "will and determination" to fulfil their responsibilities. If the League's successor was to avoid a similar fate, it was essential that all members were united and committed to collective security.[39] However, New Zealand was being somewhat idealistic in hoping that a firm pledge would ensure this end. The other delegations did not support such an absolute guarantee. Both Attlee and Smuts pointed out the difficulty of defining aggression in a complex modern world, when more subtle forms like economic penetration, propaganda and ideological offensives, were present.[40]

In discussing the procedural matters involved in signing the United Nations Charter, the meeting confirmed New Zealand's practical status as a sovereign state, despite not having formally adopted the Statute of Westminster. Rather than signing under the omnibus heading of the British Commonwealth, as had been the case with the League of Nations in 1919, it was agreed that the Dominions would be individual signatories in context with the other nations in alphabetical order.[41] This would help remove misconceptions about a Commonwealth bloc and affirm independent statehood. Canada and New Zealand also announced their intention as charter signatories to omit the official prefix "Dominion of" (which New Zealand had used in the Canberra Pact). The Secretary of External Affairs, A.D. McIntosh, saw this title as anachronistic

---

[39] BCM (45) 9th meeting, 11 April 1945, op. cit.

[40] Wood, p.381.

[41] BCM (45) Note of meeting of Commonwealth officials, 12 April 1945, op. cit.

and implying a different status from Britain. New Zealand's recent actions showed this was clearly not the case.

Fraser maintained an outspoken and uncompromising stance at San Francisco. While the Commonwealth delegations held frequent meetings, New Zealand's independent viewpoint was not compromised. Rather than playing the part of a loyalist Dominion, New Zealand was a consistent advocate for the rights of small states. Addressing the conference, Fraser condemned the Security Council veto as "distasteful and possibly disastrous".[42] The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister was promoted to compliment the Prime Minister: "I wish I could have said what you said, but I dare not."[43] As with the League of Nations, New Zealand - given its relative unimportance internationally - was able to afford the privilege of displaying an international conscience. Consequently, the New Zealand delegation supported or initiated actions to strengthen the proposed charter. This included support for an Australian amendment, restricting the use of the veto and a New Zealand amendment requiring the General Assembly's endorsement of Security Council decisions - both of which were defeated.[44] Further, New Zealand introduced a clause pledging a universal commitment to collective security but the amendment was opposed by the major powers, including "the Mother Country". While passed in the main committee

---

[42]Statement by Fraser at the Plenary Session of the San Francisco Conference, 3 May 1948, Statements and Documents, p.84.

[43]Quoted Thorn, p.233.

[44]Wood, pp.379, 381.

by 26 votes to 18, the amendment failed to attain the required two-thirds majority.[45]

The highpoint for New Zealand at San Francisco was Fraser's chairmanship of the International Trusteeship Committee, responsible for the charter provisions on trusteeship. His skill in this position made a considerable impression, confirming his status as a notable statesman.[46] The American Secretary of State, Edward Stettinus, wrote to Fraser expressing his admiration: "No-one at the conference has brought higher ideals to our work nor more persistence in seeking to give effect to them."[47] Despite New Zealand's strong advocation of the universal application of the principles of trusteeship, Fraser played a creditable mediatory role as chairman. This was an area of great potential controversy, with the imperial powers rejecting any infringements on their jurisdiction, while many smaller countries and the United States and Soviet Union supported greater international supervision of territories. Australia played a leading role in lobbying for the wider application of trusteeship, in effect expressing New Zealand's view also. Ultimately, the resulting charter articles, while extensively defining the aims and responsibilities of trusteeship, made no attempt to enforce the system on all colonial territories - this was up to the wishes of the governing power.[48]

---

[45] Ibid., p.382.

[46] McIntosh, 'Working with Peter Fraser in Wartime', p.16

[47] Quoted Wood, p.340.

[48] United Nations Charter Chapter XII, Articles 75-85.

CALL OF THE WILD

Despite New Zealand's exposure to the wider responsibilities of post-war internationalism and some sharp differences of opinion with Britain, there was no lessening of the Commonwealth's importance. After all, Commonwealth consultation had given the government direct access to the proceedings of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and the opportunity for full preliminary discussions of the issues involved. On his return from San Francisco, Fraser reassured Parliament that any differences with Britain in no way "loosened our close ties".[49] Disagreements of this kind were in any case outside the Commonwealth context, rather a result of the great power/small power division. Such was the nature of the Commonwealth that the independent members could freely disagree and discuss matters while retaining a sense of solidarity. Thus the Commonwealth was seen to function as the ideal model for international co-operation - an effective United Nations in microcosm. Fraser strongly recommended the Commonwealth's example when Chairman of the Trusteeship Committee:

> We British peoples have learnt that as well as being independent, we are interdependent, and that the future of the British Commonwealth depends upon our independence and co-operation. I go further: the future of the world depends upon our recognition of the interdependence of all nations and upon the co-operation of one nation with one another and with all nations.[50]

New Zealand's increased international role was confirmed by active participation at the many post-war

---

[49] Statement by Peter Fraser in the House of Representatives, 24 July 1945, Statements and Documents, p.95.

[50] Statement by Peter Fraser, Chairman of the Trusteeship Committee of the San Francisco Conference, June 1945, Statements and Documents, p.93.

conferences and meetings: the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Paris Peace Conference, the development of the South Pacific Commission and representation to the Council of Foreign Ministers. Fraser attended the United Nations General Assembly in London in January 1946 and was appointed Chairman of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, once again receiving extensive praise. Such increased exposure to the complexities of international relations, the reality of great power dominance and growing Soviet/Western tension obviously tempered the government's idealism. However, Wellington remained committed to forging a better world environment.

New Zealand also had to accommodate the changed balance of power in the Pacific - the unchallenged pre-eminence of the United States. This was highlighted by Washington's request in November 1945 for permanent base rights in various South and South-west Pacific islands under British, Australian and New Zealand control. During the war, the United States had established extensive facilities on many of these Commonwealth territories, including Upolu in New Zealand's mandate, Western Samoa (1942)[51] and desired to retain this strategic presence in peacetime. Exclusive control rights were requested at Funafuti in the Ellice Islands, and Canton and Christmas Islands. Joint rights were envisaged at other sites including Upolu, Fiji and Manus Island in the Admiralty chain.[52] Washington exercised

---

[51] T.R. Reese, Australia, New Zealand and the United States 1941-68 (London, 1969), p.50.

[52] See full table over page - from Report by United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, 16 April 1946, EA 153/23/4.

APPENDIX.

ISLANDS WHERE UNITED STATES SEEK LONG-TERM MILITARY BASE RIGHTS.

Place.	Administration.	Nature of Rights and Use.	United States Expenditure on Installations.	Harbour.	Air Facilities.	Present State of United States Base and Remarks.
			Dollars.			
Canton Island ...	United States-British	Exclusive. Naval and Air	7,375,500	Very limited	United States airfield, seaplane base and commercial airport	United States will retain shore facilities for support of local and transit small craft. Air facilities for emergency landings. Narrow atoll, large lagoon 9 mile by 4 mile.
Christmas Island ...	British Colony ...	Exclusive. Air ...	5,164,000	Very limited	United States airfield and seaplane base	United States Base inactive except for weather reporting station. Size of island is approximately 250 sq. miles.
Funafuti	British Colony ...	Exclusive. Naval and Air	3,793,500	Good for medium sized ships	United States airfield and seaplane base	United States Base inactive except for weather reporting station. Atoll with large lagoon 10 mile by 8 mile.
Espiritu Santo Island	Anglo - French Condominium	Joint. Naval and Air	39,125,500	Fair. Large and deep	United States airfield and naval air base	United States Base inactive except for one emergency airfield to be maintained by United States Army.
Guadalcanal-Tulagi...	British Colony ...	Joint. Naval and Air	31,405,300	Guadalcanal— Open anchorage Tulagi— Large and deep	Four United States airfields and naval air base at Guadalcanal. Naval air base at Tulagi	Guadalcanal is being reduced to:— One operational airfield and two emergency airfields. Aircraft refuelling facilities. Army weather observing station. Tulagi is being reduced to:— Seaplane base maintained by New Zealand for R.N.Z.A.F., aircraft with refuelling facilities. Minor task force anchorage.
Manus...	Australian Mandate	Joint. Naval and Air	131,757,800	Good. Large and deep	United States airfields and seaplane base	Post-war state to provide operating base for complete logistic support for one carrier task force; no new facilities will be installed and all existing facilities will be kept on c and m basis. Supplies will not be stored. Aviation Facilities—For intermittent reconnaissance and A/S operations. One airfield to be kept in sufficient operating status to support intermittently heavy patrol bombers. Facilities at other three airfields on c and m basis.
Tarawa	British Colony ...	Joint. Naval and Air	3,836,700	Fair for medium sized ships	United States airfield...	United States base inactive except for weather reporting station.
Upolu	New Zealand Mandate	Joint. Air ...	2,473,800	Fair for medium sized ships	United States airfield and seaplane base	Being reduced to— Token garrison. Seaplane base with limited facilities for staging. Emergency airfield.
Viti Levu	British Colony ...	Joint. Naval and Air	4,000,000	Suva— Deep water harbour, moderate size Nandi— Good anchorage	Five airfields	Being reduced to— Operational airfield for Air Transport Command. Emergency airfield with token garrison. New Zealand seaplane base.
Ascension Island ...	British Colony ...	Joint. Air ...	7,250,000	Open anchorage only.	United States airfield	Naval: reduced status. Army: Air base. Hospital.

Compiled from information in M.M. (S) (46) 22, and from Directory of United States Naval Overseas Bases, December 1945.

considerable pressure on the Commonwealth here, even trying to coax Britain to cede Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands.[53]

This was a very controversial matter, as the inter-war period had seen a conflict of claims between New Zealand and the United States over Pacific territory.[54] Further, the Canberra Pact emphasised that the construction or use of base facilities by another nation in wartime did not constitute a basis for sovereignty.[55] Consequently, in discussions with Secretary of State Byrnes in London 22 January 1946, Fraser distinguished base rights from territorial sovereignty. He pointed out that the United States still laid claim to the Northern Cook Islands (New Zealand territory), caustically inquiring if such claims were based on occupation or discovery. As far as sovereignty over the disputed islands was concerned, Fraser was adamant that there was "nothing doing". The United States preferred to concentrate on the more pressing issue of base rights, but even here Fraser was less than enthusiastic. Despite considerable American expenditure at Upolu, New Zealand, he declared, was prepared to refund the money and establish a solely British base.[56] A residual suspicion of United States policy remained evident. However, in February 1946, the United States formally proposed a bi-lateral agreement for the continued use of facilities in Western Samoa.[57]

---

[53]Secretary of State Byrnes implied to Attlee in Paris, April 1946, that such an action would likely help attain Congressional approval of American loans - Sinclair, Walter Nash, p.248.

[54]This related to the expanding needs of aviation and communications.

[55]Clause 16 of Australian-New Zealand Agreement in Kay, p.143.

Despite Fraser's comments to Byrnes (which amounted to an independent posture rather than practical policy), New Zealand recognised the necessity of involving the United States in the defence of Commonwealth territory in the Pacific. It was thus hoped that the question of bases would facilitate a regional security agreement.[58]

The new international environment did not, however, lessen New Zealand's British identity. At the opening of parliament in June 1946, the vice-regal speech emphasised that while New Zealand was "a sovereign state" with obligations to the United Nations Charter, it "justly prided itself on its traditions of loyalty to the throne and its unswerving devotion to the British Commonwealth".[59] Close inter-Commonwealth defence ties remained essential. Thus in early 1946 the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff advocated the establishment of an extended Committee of Imperial Defence to supervise Commonwealth strategic planning, comprising the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff and Dominion staff representatives. A regional organisation for the Pacific, co-ordinating with the London headquarters, was also envisaged.[60] It was further hoped that the scope of this defence co-operation would extend to technical and scientific research. Such inter-Commonwealth machinery had

---

[56]Note of a meeting in Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' office, London, 22 January 1946, EA 153/23/4.

[57]Reese, p.50.

[58]Memorandum by U.K. Chiefs of Staff, 16 April 1946 had emphasised this. EA 153/23/4.

[59]NZPD, 26 June 1946, vol. 273, pp.1-3.

[60]Minutes of 158th Meeting of NZ COS Committee, 29 March 1946, EA 156/10/1 pt. 1; NZ COS Paper (46) 10, Defence Co-operation Between Members of the British

not been present in the pre-war period, but New Zealand saw developments here as necessary safeguards for security. It remained to be seen if other Commonwealth members would endorse these ideas.

II. THE 1946 PRIME MINISTERS' MEETING

The first major occasion to test post-war Commonwealth solidarity was the Prime Ministers' Meeting in April and May 1946. Significantly, there was no return to the formality of an Imperial Conference (last held in 1937), rather continuity with the informal exchange of views as established at the Prime Ministers' Meeting of 1944. Compared to the elaborate Imperial Conferences, these meetings were simply intimate get-togethers; no formal decisions were possible given the independence and equality of all members, while any recommendations required reference to the respective governments. Clement Attlee aptly described the meetings as "a talk round the table between friends ... As in a British Cabinet meeting, one arrived at a consensus of opinion."[61]

New Zealand was represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, Walter Nash; Fraser, having been in London only a few months earlier, decided not to attend, although he did accompany Nash to Sydney for consultation with the Australian government. The meeting was notable as the last to comprise of just Britain and the "Old Dominions" - Indian independence

---

Commonwealth 12 April 1946 EA 81/4/3 pt. 5.

[61] C.R.A. Attlee, Empire into Commonwealth (London, 1961), p.25.

in 1947 was to drastically alter the make-up of future such events. Following the meeting, Nash remained in London to represent the government at the Empire Victory Parade on 8 June. The presence of New Zealand troops here, clearly portrayed the country's strong identity with the Commonwealth.[62]

The Prime Ministers' Meeting was initially an "ANZUK" affair - "the executive of the Empire Labour Party"[63] in convocation - with the South African and Canadian delegations arriving later. Pacific matters consequently dominated the early proceedings. Australia and New Zealand had already announced their intention of asserting regional Commonwealth leadership in the South Pacific; and this corresponded with the meeting's emphasis on the need for increased Dominion responsibility in regional defence.[64] The Australian government was particularly eager to advance developments here and its spokesmen dominated discussions. Prime Minister Ben Chifley strongly advocated that Canberra should take administrative responsibility for joint Commonwealth defence activities in the Pacific.[65] External Affairs Minister Herbert Evatt further proposed the establishment of a "South Seas Commission" providing regional co-operation in social and economic matters.[66]

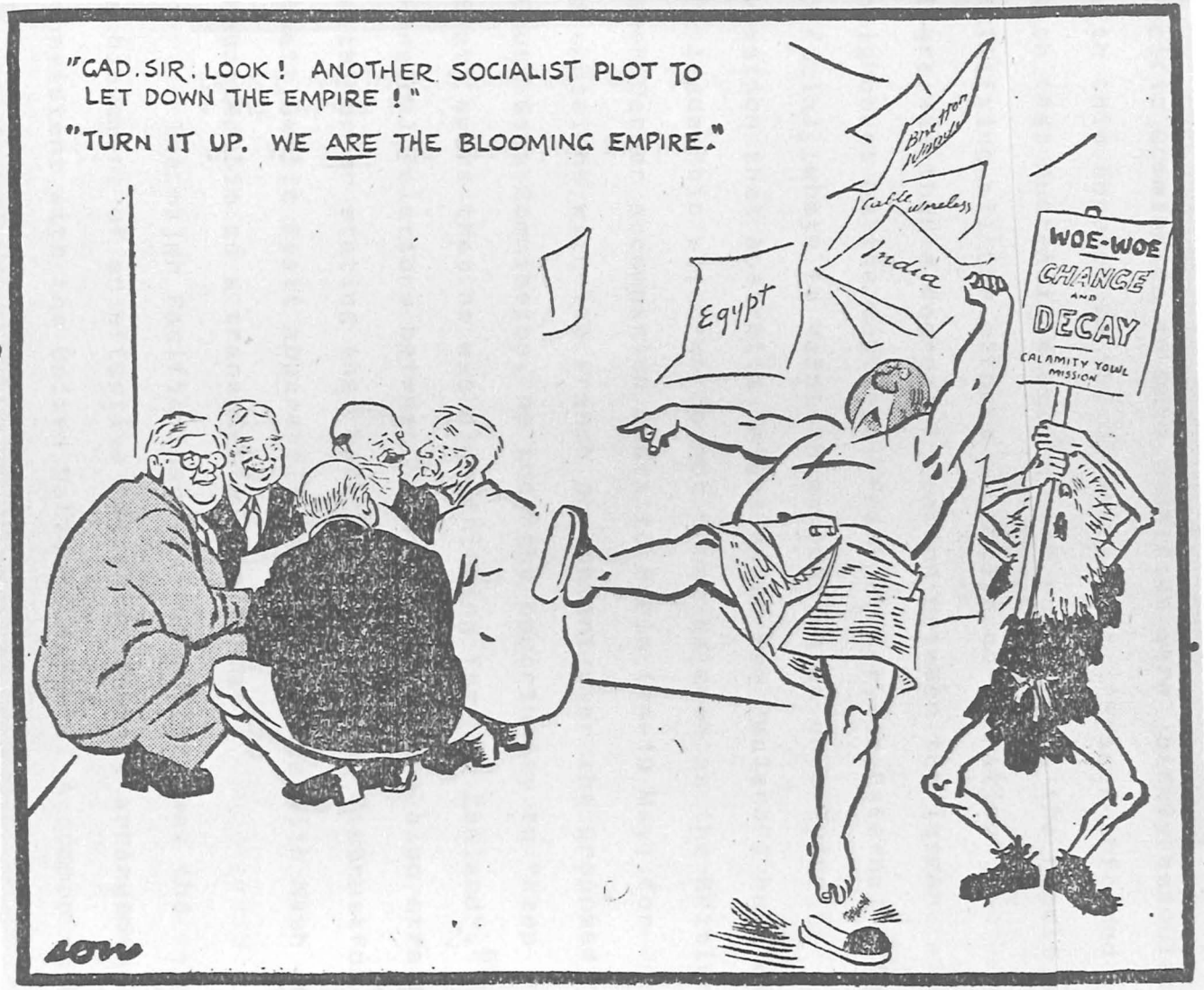
New Zealand supported increased inter-Commonwealth co-operation in the Pacific, but was not prepared to accept

---

[62] The Press, 10 June 1946 gave extensive coverage of this occasion - "a mighty demonstration of Commonwealth solidarity".

[63] Reported remark by British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin at first session, quoted McIntyre, p.56.

[64] PMM (46) Minutes of 4th Meeting, 25 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.



IMPERIAL BLIMP

Australian domination. This concern was accentuated by Evatt's aggressive style. For example, the New Zealand delegation resented Australia's unilateral action and lack of prior consultation over the proposal for the South Pacific Commission, as both countries were jointly associated with this concept in the Canberra Pact. Fraser informed Nash that Australia's action here could "have the result of nullifying all our efforts at active co-operation".[67] There was thus a degree of tension between the Tasman neighbours at the meeting. Frank Corner, an External Affairs official, wrote to McIntosh expressing an underlying vexation that Australia "might swamp New Zealand"; here was "a leadership which we do not trust as much as the British".[68] When Corner accompanied Evatt to Paris (14-19 May) for discussions with the French government over the proposed South Seas Commission, he took the opportunity to "keep Evatt aware that he was also thinking for New Zealand".[69] Personal relations between Nash and Evatt were also strained, with Corner stating that Nash was jealous and distrustful of Evatt, while Evatt apparently lacked patience with Nash and regarded him as a transplanted Englishman.[70]

The major Pacific issue at the meeting was the achievement of an effective regional security arrangement, consistent with the United Nations Charter. A common scheme

---

[65] Ibid.

[66] PMM (46) Minutes of 11th Meeting, 3 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[67] Fraser to Nash, 3 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[68] Letter Corner to McIntosh and Wilson, 27 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

of defence between the three Commonwealth partners was envisaged, but it was seen as essential to be associated with the pre-eminent power of the United States.[71] The Canadian-United States defence agreement was seen as the appropriate model. Chifley and Evatt thus proposed linking Washington's request for continued base rights with the development of a regional security commitment - though not necessarily a formal pact. Rather than separate bi-lateral negotiations, a united stance was agreed, making the granting of bases conditional on an acceptable defence arrangement.[72] It was also agreed that the request for exclusive rights was unacceptable, particularly as the three islands concerned were important for Australasian communications. Joint rights were permissible but all Commonwealth members were to have access, rather than the American proposal, limiting this to the administering power and the United States. This was a liability in the event of the United States remaining neutral while the Commonwealth was at war. The Commonwealth partners would also need to retain full jurisdiction over their island territories.[73]

As Nash maintained, the Commonwealth was seeking partnership with the United States, not wholesale domination.[74]

---

[69] Letter Corner to McIntosh, 31 May 1946, ibid. This was not an official trip but the result of a "vacant seat".

[70] Ibid.

[71] PMM (46) Minutes of 3rd meeting, 24 April 1946, EA 153/23/3. This had also been the recommendation of a U.K. Chiefs of Staff Memorandum, 16 April 1946, EA 153/23/4, op. cit.

[72], [73] PMM (46) Minutes of 3rd meeting, 24 April 1946.

[74] Nash to Prime Minister, 7 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

America was a reinforcement rather than a replacement for Commonwealth defence.[75] An agreed formula to submit to Washington was approved by the three Commonwealth partners on 26 April.[76] The New Zealand government saw this as an equitable proposal, it was only right that the United States "should give as well as receive".[77] However, there was considerable doubt that Washington would commit itself to such an arrangement.[78]

Ernest Bevin approached the State Department with the Commonwealth proposal in early May, but true to Fraser and Nash's predictions, Secretary Byrnes was adamant that the United States was not interested in any regional defence agreement.[79] Discussions continued but it became clear that the three Commonwealth partners lacked sufficient leverage to force an agreement, particularly as American security interests were more in the North Pacific. Australia remained adamant that no base rights would be granted without a reciprocal commitment, though New Zealand was ultimately prepared to grant the United States base facilities without this condition.[80] However, American interest in South Pacific bases finally ended with President Truman's 1946

---

[75] I.C. MacGibbon, 'The Defence of New Zealand 1945-57', New Zealand in World Affairs, Volume I (Wellington, 1977), p.149.

[76] PMM (46) Minutes of 5th meeting, 26 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[77] Fraser to Nash, 29 April 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[78] Nash to Fraser, 24 April 1946, ibid; Fraser to Nash, 29 April 1946, ibid.

[79] PMM (46) Minutes of 12th meeting, 6 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[80] Draft of USA-NZ agreement re Upolu 1946; Nash to Fraser 22 July 1946. In Nash Papers N2288, quoted Sinclair, Walter Nash, pp.249,400.

cuts in defence expenditure, and the concentration of activities north of the equator.[81] Australia and New Zealand would have to wait until 1951 before a regional security arrangement was reached.

In wider terms the 1946 meeting brought home the grim reality of Britain's post-war weakness. His Majesty's government were quite open about their critical finance and manpower situation, and by implication their diminished status as a major power. The war effort had liquidated much of Britain's foreign investment, which played an important part in financing both the costs of Commonwealth defence and Britain's imports. Britain was consequently now a debtor nation, needing to increase exports by 75% over pre-war figures.[82] There was also the major burden of repaying American loans. Yet, simultaneously, huge defence expenditures (estimated at £1,176 million for 1946 - 20% of G.N.P.) and military manpower requirements (the United Kingdom armed forces were estimated at numbering 1,077,000 by the end of 1946) remained.[83] This situation created an immense strain on precious resources and was emphasised with great concern by British ministers:

> The United Kingdom is bearing a burden of unprecedented magnitude in the field of defence ... which cannot be laid down or set aside without serious repercussions in international relations.[84]

It was also made clear that in a future war, the Commonwealth could not function as a self-sufficient bloc

---

[81] Reese, p.55.

[82] Nash's Report to Fraser on P.M.'s Meeting, 22 July 1946, EA 153/23/5; C.J. Bartlett, The Long Retreat (London: 1972), pp.11-12.

[83] PMM (46) Minutes of 18th Meeting, 22 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

and would need the active support of the United States. Any Commonwealth defence system would thus have to be capable of interlocking with American power.[85]

Such a resume had a very sobering effect on a Commonwealth fresh from the adulation of victory. As Frank Corner exclaimed:

> Never before had the Dominions been spoken to like this ... the plain fact is that Britain is not a great power, she cannot afford the expense and manpower to act like one.[86]

While Nash and most of his delegation were in utmost sympathy with the beleaguered Mother Country, Corner was surprisingly less charitable, strongly criticising Britain's social and economic legacy:

> her industry was obsolete and inefficient before the war, ruined by a rotting capitalist system which denied healthy and enthusiastic workers, and a class education system which did not produce enough scientists to refurbish it.[87]

Here were the comments of an "angry young man", but they conveyed a brutal honesty, reflecting the bleak post-war environment.

Clearly, the onus was on the Dominions to help alleviate some of Britain's immense burden:

> Unless some share of responsibility is assumed by the Dominions with all the difficulties that this imparts through our independence in foreign policy, the United Kingdom must have a serious stocktaking of her position in the international order.[88]

---

[84] From paper submitted by Dominions' Secretary, Lord Addison, 22 May - recounted Nash to Fraser, 23 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[85] UK COS memorandum 'Organisation for Commonwealth Defence', 1 May 1946, EA 153/23/4.

[86], [87] Corner to McIntosh and Wilson, 27 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[88] From paper submitted by Dominions' Secretary, 22 May, op. cit.

The problem was how to achieve a greater Dominion contribution. Nash initially advocated that the Commonwealth should try to act as a united force in foreign policy, thereby maintaining a strong British influence and parallel the power of the United States and Soviet Union.[89] However, this reassertion of "Halifax's thesis" was unfeasible given Dominion sovereignty.[90] Thus, when the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff suggested the development of joint defence planning,[91] other delegations resoundly rejected this as an infringement of sovereignty.[92]

Instead of the Dominions contributing to a more centralised defence system, as independent nations their role was best achieved by taking increased responsibility for their own regional security - a devolution rather than concentration of resources.[93] Australia and New Zealand had already announced their intention of doing so in the Canberra Pact. This policy would effectively relieve some of Britain's burden while also corresponding to the constitutional reality of sovereign status. As independent nations, the primary responsibility of Commonwealth members

---

[89] PMM (46) Minutes of first meeting, 23 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[90] Corner was critical of a lot of Nash's contributions to the meeting - "Mr Nash was often too busy to study the P.M.'s Conference and expressed some very curious ideas." Letter to McIntosh 27 May 1946, op. cit.

[91] UK COS memorandum: 'Responsibilities for Commonwealth Defence', 20 April 1946, EA 153/23/4 - "Each member of the Commonwealth therefore should agree to take all steps, political and military, in those areas in which they are directly concerned so as to maintain conditions favourable to the Commonwealth in peace and to accept joint responsibility for the defence in war." Submitted to meeting 25 April 1946 EA 153/23/3.

[92] Nash's Report, 22 July 1946, EA 153/23/5.

[93] PMM (46) 18th Meeting, 23 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

was the maintenance of their own security, though, given New Zealand's smallness and isolation, this needed expression in a wider defence arrangement.

New Zealand was quite prepared to increase its share of defence responsibility. However, Nash still thought in terms of imperial strategy, rather than the more independent policies of Canada and South Africa . He asked for the full cost of Commonwealth-wide defence (in both finance and manpower), thereby allowing an equitable division of expenditure.[94] This attitude was criticised by other leaders. Smuts was adamant that the Dominions were not paying "tribute" to Britain, they were rather carrying out the national duty of ensuring their own security.[95] But while the Dominions could claim to be exercising greater national responsibility, Corner pointed out that "sheer necessity" rather than independent zeal had forced this decentralisation:

> it is dangerous to sentimentalise about a position into which we have been forced by weakness ... Britain is reducing her commitments, cutting her losses, leaving herself free to concentrate her resources in the areas which she regards as most vital. The Pacific is not one of those areas.[96]

While a centralised Commonwealth defence system was not possible, an effective understanding and co-ordination of members' individual policies was desirable. During the war this had been achieved not by formal machinery but by constant communication between respective governments and defence authorities. This was a flexible, even improvised

---

[94] PMM (46) Minutes of 18th Meeting, 22 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Corner to McIntosh and Wilson, 27 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

system, but proved effective, facilitating common military planning and co-ordinated arms production. Could similar co-ordination be maintained in peacetime without infringing on individual sovereignty? In pursuit of this, Nash circulated proposals by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff for a new Imperial Defence Committee, comprising the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff and Dominion joint staff missions, with a common secretariat.[97] However, the other delegations did not support such a concept, which seemed to imply a unitary policy.

In turn, the British authorities proposed a more decentralised system involving the exchange of service missions between the Dominions and London and between Dominions where appropriate.[98] These missions would represent their own Chiefs of Staff and provide liaison with the defence departments of the accredited nation. Such a system aimed to provide effective inter-Commonwealth defence consultation, integrating the various independent regional policies. The model for this arrangement was the wartime Combined Chiefs of Staff between the United States and Britain.

The British proposals received a generally enthusiastic response. As the Australian delegation expressed:

---

[97] NZ COS memorandum circulated by Nash, 'Defence Co-operation and Responsibilities within the British Commonwealth', 27 April 1946, EA 153/23/4.

[98] U.K. COS memorandum, 'Organisation for Commonwealth Defence', 20 April 1946; Revised version 1 May 1946, EA 153/23/4.

> An entirely new concept in British Commonwealth relations is now emerging. This concept tends to reconcile full Dominion autonomy with full British Commonwealth co-operation ... the machinery between nations of the British Commonwealth has now reached a stage where a common policy can be carried out through a chosen Dominion instrumentality in an area or in relation to a subject matter which is of primary concern to that Dominion.[99]

However, some minor problems were raised. Nash remarked that co-ordination between five partners would be more complex than the bi-lateral American/British arrangement in the war.[100] Smuts raised the further contention that military missions would give outsiders the impression that the Commonwealth was ganging up. Furthermore, nationalist sensitivities, particularly in South Africa, could be offended by the presence of British military missions and the implication of unitary policy. To help counter such misconceptions Nash proposed using the title "liaison officers" rather than service missions.[101]

As well as the decentralisation of defence responsibility, the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff also suggested the possibility of redistributing the aggregate strength and resources of the Commonwealth. An ambitious "Dispersal" plan would transfer manpower, industrial capacity and armament production from strategically vulnerable Britain to the Dominions.[102] The Commonwealth's

---

[99] PMM (46)8, 1 May 1946, EA 153/23/4.

[100] PMM (46) Minutes of 4th Meeting, 25 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[101] PMM (46) Minutes of 10th Meeting, 2 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[102] UK COS Papers 'The Strategic Position of the Commonwealth' and 'Responsibilities for Commonwealth Defence' 20 April 1946, EA 153/23/4. The impact of nuclear weapons was a major catalyst for this proposal.

war capacity would thus be more evenly spread. This, however, implied a unitary defence policy - rejected by the Prime Ministers - or at least a tacit understanding of solidarity in the event of war. The proposal therefore contradicted the sovereignty and individual defence responsibility of the Dominions. The Australian response was favourable,[103] though this was essentially because the proposal corresponded with the nation's own development policies. As Prime Minister Chifley told the House of Representatives on his return from London, the government supported the decentralisation of the Commonwealth's productive capacity. Australia, he said, wanted to increase its population, expand its industrial base and develop a munitions and defence industry.[104] In contrast, Nash regarded the socio-economic consequences of dispersal as potentially destabilising for the Commonwealth, and saw the proposal as hypothetical and impractical.[105] Nash's view was ultimately vindicated as the dispersal plan was not taken any further.[106]

The New Zealand delegation was somewhat alarmed by Britain's pessimistic assumptions in defence planning: that the United Nations would be unable to prevent war between the great powers and that the Soviet Union "is our most probable potential enemy".[107] The British government maintained a strong anti-Soviet stance during the meeting,

---

[103] PMM (46) Minutes of 4th Meeting, 25 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[104] Chifley's Report to House of Representatives, 19 June 1946, EA 156/1/1 pt. 2.

[105] PMM (46) Minutes of 4th Meeting, 25 April 1946, EA 153/23/3; Nash to Fraser, 26 April, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[106] Bartlett, p.11.

a consequence of the growing East/West rift in Europe. Considering New Zealand's high expectations for positive post-war international co-operation, this was a disillusioning approach. The Australians strongly criticised this "war mentality", arguing it would only increase the possibility of conflict.[108] Corner quoted Evatt as remarking: "Just as well we came or they'd have declared war."[109] New Zealand had of course warned that the Security Council veto ensured that the great powers would not be constrained (Britain was now vindicating New Zealand's strong opposition in London and San Francisco) and Nash agreed that the embryonic United Nations would be severely tested in the international environment.[110] However, both the New Zealand and Australian delegations could not accept the premise of an impotent United Nations: "We must work on the assumption tha the United Nations has the fullest authority and that everything must be done to secure this and make it effective."[1] Britain's (and the Commonwealth's) best option, Nash regarded, was to fully support the United Nations and to ensure it achieved the desired ends.[112]

In terms of wider inter-Commonwealth consultation, Lord Addison inquired if there were any desired improvements. He affirmed the basic tenets of consultation as formalised in 1930 - governments would inform and consult if other members' interests were involved; and that governments would not take

---

[107] Nash's Report on P.M.'s Meeting, 22 July 1946, EA 153/23/5.

[108] PMM (46) Minutes of first meeting, 23 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[109] Corner to McIntosh, 27 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[110] Minutes of 4th Meeting, 25 April 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[111] Nash's Report, 22 July 1946, EA 153/23/5.

actions which might involve other members without their definite consent. Noting the masses of telegrams despatched daily from the Dominions' Office to Commonwealth capitals, Addison concluded that the present system was effective, and had been successfully put to the test in war. This view was backed up by MacKenzie King, who emphasised that constant communication between governments was the only appropriate method of consultation. While not demeaning the importance of Prime Ministers' meetings, MacKenzie King stated he was hesitant to express opinions in this context, as he did not have formal cabinet backing. This was contrasted by the "continuing conference of cabinets", provided by constant inter-government communication.[113]

It was thus agreed that the existing form of Commonwealth consultation remained appropriate. There were, however, minor details, of which Nash raised four points. Firstly, he differentiated between information and consultation, expressing concern that Britain sometimes (usually in emergencies) took actions without prior consultation, subsequently informing the Dominions at late notice.[114] The obvious example here was the resented Cairo Conference of 1943. As Fraser emphasised to Nash by telegraph, frequent consultation was essential "in view of the added liabilities we may be called to carry".[115]

---

[112] Ibid.

[113] PMM (46) Minutes of 19th Meeting, 23 May 1946, EA 153/23/3.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Fraser to Nash, 30 April 1946, EA 156/10/1 pt. 1.

This showed that New Zealand remained committed to supporting Britain, albeit as a sovereign nation. Secondly, Nash advocated extending the practice of repeating to other Commonwealth governments bi-lateral exchanges. Thirdly, he advanced increased inter-Dominion consultation, highlighting the example of the Canberra Pact. And finally, there was the suggestion that all governments should continue to circulate any relevant information from their representatives in foreign capitals to their Commonwealth partners. Such proposals highlighted New Zealand's continued commitment to an integrated, co-operative Commonwealth.

In fact, New Zealand was somewhat concerned that Commonwealth consultation was becoming too decentralised, concentrating on the regional interests of members rather than joint issues. For example, Nash regretted that Canada showed a lack of interest in matters outside North America.[116] New Zealand still retained an imperial perspective, despite a proudly held independence. This viewpoint was evident when New Zealand was the only delegation to regard Egypt as an area of joint Commonwealth concern rather than Britain's sole responsibility. As Nash stated:

> If this is so I question whether there is any area towards which the members of the Commonwealth would accept the position that there must be a joint policy and we are therefore in the situation that each member of the Commonwealth will take a primary responsibility in its own region, but will go no further.[117]

This was a logical development given the structure of the Commonwealth, but New Zealand still believed in a more cohesive association.

---

[116] Nash's Report, 22 July 1946, EA 153/23/5.

[117] Ibid.

Given the nature of the Commonwealth, the Prime Ministers' Meeting provided few concrete results. However, it provided a frank appraisal of post-war reality: Britain's decline as a major power and the consequent devolution of defence responsibility to a regional-Dominion context. This was confirmed by the United Kingdom's White Paper on Defence, released in 1946:

> The natural starting point for future progress in Commonwealth defence has been the idea of regional association. Geography largely decides which problems most directly concern the separate members of the Commonwealth and it is the aim of the various governments to recognise and take advantage of this fact by arranging that regional questions shall in the first place be studied in the appropriate regional centre.[118]

Consequently, the British government did not revive the Committee of Imperial Defence. Instead, a new Cabinet defence committee was created, specifically concerned with the United Kingdom's security.[119] The Dominions were not represented here, nor was the Dominions' Secretary a permanent member. This apparent abandonment of the imperial connection railed some Conservative politicians.[120] However, a more localised defence perspective reflected contemporary reality. The Dominions were sovereign nations with their own regional interests, while secondly and more importantly, the Commonwealth was no longer a self-sufficient bloc. Member nations now needed to develop regional security arrangements with their non-Commonwealth neighbours. New Zealand (despite special

---

[118] U.K. White Paper, 'Central Organisation for Defence' October 1946, p.11 EA 156/1/1, pt. 2.

[119] Ibid., p.6.

[120] Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, House of Lords, 16 October 1946, pp.1199-1203.

emotional and economic bonds with Britain) appreciated the new balance of power, hence the ultimate willingness to give the United States base rights in Western Samoa. The very concept of imperial defence had become outdated, replaced by the wider Western alliance.

The new international order provided a major challenge for the Commonwealth; as Frank Corner commented, it "showed the wooliness of much past talk about Commonwealth relations".[121] But the removal of imperial illusions only confirmed the essential structure of the Commonwealth - a free association of independent, albeit closely linked, states. As the final communique of the Prime Ministers' Meeting emphasised, the British Commonwealth was a peculiar institution, not based on an organic structure:

> Centralised machinery would not facilitate, and might even hamper the combination of autonomy and unity which is characteristic of the British Commonwealth.[122]

Yet it seemed that despite an expressed independence, New Zealand would have preferred a more cohesive association.

"Autonomy and unity" - these paradoxical features of the Commonwealth relationship were encapsulated by New Zealand's position in the immediate post-war environment. On one hand, the status of an independent nation was manifest in the regional assertion of the Canberra

---

[121] Corner to McIntosh and Wilson, 27 May 1946, EA 153/23/1 pt. 1.

[122] From text of final communique of 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting, issued to the press 23 May 1946, EA 153/23/8.

Pact, defence negotiations with the United States and ardent support for an effective international security system (even at the cost of opposing Great Britain). Further, a weakened United Kingdom ensured that New Zealand had to take an increased initiative to maintain its own security and interests. Here, then, was the phenomenon of the "small power rampant". But, concurrently, New Zealand was an adamantly British nation, emotionally and economically bound to the Mother Country, actively supporting the maintenance of a strong and unified Commonwealth. Certainly, compared to some of the more assertive Dominions, New Zealand maintained a distinct imperial perspective. The independent small state and the loyal Dominion thus coexisted. Could they be successfully balanced?

CHAPTER II

"AID TO BRITAIN": THE CONTINUITY OF ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

> If Britain goes down ... New Zealand will go down with Britain. We are tied to her not only by ties of blood ... but inextricably by ties of trade.
>
> - J. Watts, NZPD, 11 July 1947, Vol. 276, p.456.

The immediate post-war years saw the continuity of New Zealand's wartime policy of economic support for Britain. Victory had severely weakened the British economy, with the loss of half the nation's foreign investments.[1] This necessitated the arduous task of rehabilitation. Sympathy and solidarity with the beleaguered Mother Country ensured that New Zealand's assistance would be forthcoming. National feeling was aptly expressed in the words of the Leader of the Opposition, Sidney Holland:

> Who were the people who submitted to and suffered a seven day bombing week so that we in New Zealand should enjoy a five day working week? ... the first thing that we should decide is that everything we can spare is Britain's whether she can pay or not.[2]

Charity and sentiment were strong motivating factors, but New Zealand's concern primarily reflected the reality of economic dependency. Britain was the nation's predominant trading partner (in 1946 the market

---

[1] Bartlett, p.11.

[2] NZPD, 26 August 1947, Vol. 277, p.595.

for 70% of exports and 48% of imports)[3] and was the banker of our international exchange reserves, through the Sterling Area. The preservation and recovery of the British economy was thus vital to New Zealand's long term prosperity. As the Minister of Finance, Walter Nash, admitted to parliament 21 August 1947, the country's "material interests" were irrevocably "bound up with our people in the homeland".[4] In economic terms, New Zealand remained a British colony.

To help Britain "win the peace", New Zealand maintained a war economy: sterling reserves were conserved - highlighted by the "gift" of £12.5 million in 1947; restrictions on dollar expenditure were maintained; and bulk purchasing arrangements renewed - whereby all surplus meat and dairy products were sold to Britain at below market prices. These policies necessitated continued sacrifices. For example, import needs were curtailed, the nation's terms of trade suffered, and rationing continued. Alternatively, the government was able to control New Zealand's balance of payments and stabilise the economy, but this was at the cost of reduced economic returns. In the longer term, New Zealand served to tighten its economic dependency with Britain, precluding the possibility of increased diversification. However, established ties of trade and sentiment, coupled with economic crisis, committed New Zealand to its course of action.

---

[3] N.Z. Official Year Book 1951-52 (Wellington, 1952) pp.235, 257.

[4] NZPD, 21 August 1947, Vol. 277, p.536.

I. STERLING AREA SOLIDARITY

The Sterling Area comprised those nations using sterling as a common international currency, pooling their foreign reserves in London and drawing from this to finance external payments. All Commonwealth countries with the exception of Canada were members, as were Ireland,[5] Iceland, Burma and Iraq. Beginning as an informal association, the Sterling Bloc was formalised into a distinct monetary unit in the Second World War, whereby members agreed to conserve reserves to support the war effort. Exchange controls were thus enforced on hard currency expenditure, ensuring that the pool of valuable dollar earnings was maintained. By this austerity policy, members were able to extend extensive credit to Britain which accumulated as sterling balances. By December 1945, total sterling balances amounted to £3,700 million, compared to actual reserves of £610 million.[6] New Zealand's own balances had increased from £9million in 1939 to £102 million in August 1947.[7]

An indebted Britain was, however, unable to honour this immense post-war liability. It was, therefore, hoped that members would be prepared to write off some of their credits.[8] John Maynard Keynes reflected Whitehall's viewpoint when stating that Britain had weathered the immense cost of war only to:

---

[5]For details of Ireland's anomalous position in the Commonwealth see Chapter IV.

[6]P.C. Gordon Walker, The Commonwealth (London, 1962), p.259.

[7]'New Zealand and the Dollar Crisis', Round Table December 1947, Vol. 38, No. 149, p.512.

[8]This was expressed in Britain's loan agreement with

> end up owing vast sums, not to neutrals and bystanders, but to our own allies, Dominions and associates who ought to figure in the eyes of history as our mercenaries unless the balance is redressed.[9]

In discussions with both Fraser and Nash in February and May of 1946 respectively, the British government strongly pressed New Zealand to reduce its sterling balances. It was particularly hoped that such an action would set an example to major sterling holders like India and Egypt, who were pressing the Treasury.[10]

Despite an avowed willingness to support the Mother Country, New Zealand was not prepared to passively scale down its sterling balances. Nash maintained that New Zealand had not amassed large balances by exploiting Britain. By contrast, financial sacrifice had been incurred by the constant supply of foodstuffs at below market prices. In turn, wartime restraint had produced a backlog of vital capital imports.[11] Sterling balances were, therefore, essential resources that New Zealand could use, not imperial tribute. However, as Britain's financial standing deteriorated and American loans proved insufficient, New Zealand proved more amenable. In March 1947, Fraser announced the "gift" of £10 million (ultimately £12.5 million) to the United Kingdom; in effect, a reduction in the nation's sterling balances amounting to 10% of New Zealand's overseas funds.[12] This was a significant surrender of resources, but Fraser publicly justified the grant as recognising "the enormous burden that the United Kingdom has carried and is bearing

---

the United States, December 1945.

[9]Quoted M.A. McKinnon, 'The Impact of War: A Diplomatic History of New Zealand's Economic Relations with Britain 1939-54'(Ph.D. Thesis, Victoria University,

during the post-war period".[13]

The major problem facing the Sterling Area in the post-war environment was the scarcity of hard currency, particularly United States dollars. The demand for dollars was high; wartime constraint meant that members now required extensive capital imports, with the United States being the major source of supply. However, London's massive balance of payments deficit meant that reserves were not available "to furnish dollars as required by the rest of the Sterling Area".[14] Continued exchange controls were therefore necessary to maintain stability.

Washington opposed such discriminatory practices and in the negotiations for emergency American loans to Britain in December 1945, it was made conditional that sterling earned in current transactions would become freely convertible.[15] Exchange controls were ultimately relaxed on 15 July 1947, but this produced a major run on reserves as members rushed to purchase dollars. The graph on the following page shows the sudden drop in hard currency reserves in the last quarter of 1947. The

---

1981), p.187.

[10] In 1945 Egypt's sterling balances amounted to £400 million and India's £1,000 million. Quoted Nash, NZPD, 20 September 1949, Vol. 287, p.2231.

[11] McKinnon, p.189-191.

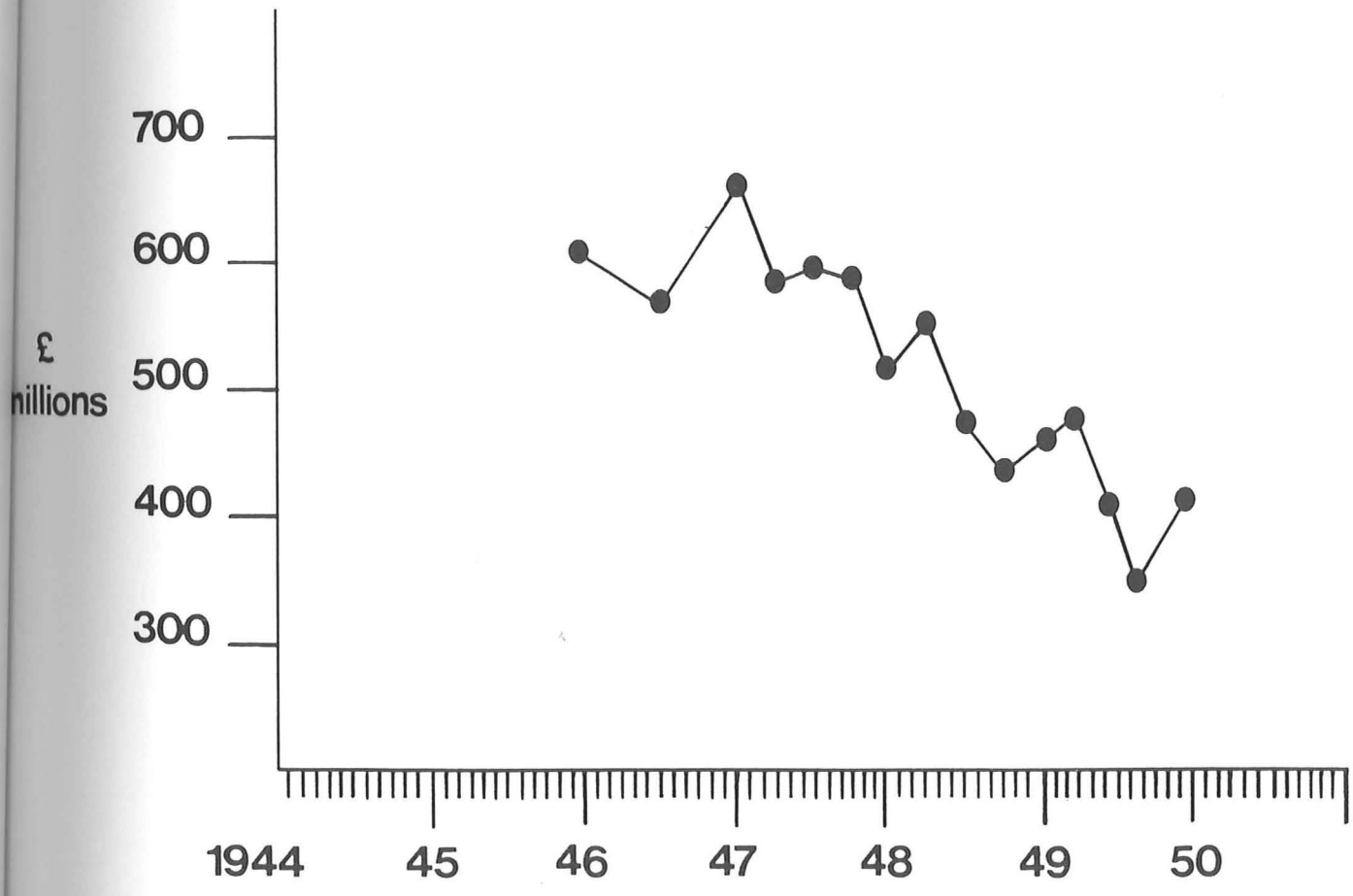
[12] New Zealand Herald, 6 March 1947; K. Sinclair, Walter Nash (Auckland, 1976), pp.271-272.

[13] New Zealand Herald, ibid.

[14] Dominions' Secretary to Minister of External Affairs, 3 February 1947 EA 58/2/2/1, pt.1.

[15] Gordon Walker, p.260. Loan of $3,750 million.

Sterling Area
Gold and Dollar Reserves



GOLD AND DOLLAR RESERVES OF THE STERLING AREA

- EA 154/7/3, pt. 3

Date	In terms of U.S. Million Dollars	In terms of £ Million
31.12.45	2,476	610
30.06.46	2,310	567
31.12.46	2,696	664
31.03.47	2,380	586
30.06.47	2,410	593
30.09.47	2,383	587
31.12.47	2,079	512
31.03.48*	2,241	552
30.06.48	1,920	473
30.09.48	1,777	437
31.12.48	1,856	457
31.03.49	1,912	471
30.06.49	1,651	406
30.09.49	1,425	351 (509)[a]
31.12.49	1,688	416 (603)[a]

* Immediately before the beginning of the European Recovery Programme.

[a] After the devaluation of sterling to £1 = U.S.$2.80.

Sterling Area's gold and dollar deficit for 1947 subsequently increased substantially. In the face of mounting financial crisis, exchange controls were restored on 20 August, blocking the bulk of the dollar pool.[16]

Attlee spelt out the urgency of the currency crisis in a personal telegram to Fraser, 12 August 1947, urging New Zealand's support. To help maintain the sterling balances it was requested that New Zealand restrict its imports to within the limits of current income. The conservation of dollars was particularly important and further economies in areas of major dollar expenditure such as petrol (Britain's recent 10% cut in consumption was highlighted) and capital works programmes were suggested. New Zealand was also asked to accept delays in the supply of import needs such as steel, agricultural machinery and superphosphate, rather than purchase readily available quantities from dollar sources.[17] To monitor the dollar situation, the Sterling Area Statistical Committee was subsequently established - evidence of the increasing institutionalisation of the Sterling Area at a time of crisis.

Consequent action showed New Zealand's willingness to support Britain's proposals. In late August and

---

[16] Gordon Walker, pp.260-61.

[17] Attlee to Fraser, 12 August 1947, EA 58/2/2/1, pt.2.

September 1947, the Aid for Britain Conference was held in parliament, bringing all the major sector groups together to determine strategies of economic assistance.[18] A National Council was subsequently established and it was agreed to limit dollar expenditure as far as practicable. To help achieve this aim an extensive government funded publicity campaign was mounted. An example of the ensuing publicity is shown in the petrol saving advertisement on the following page.[19] Reducing petrol consumption was one of the main targets identified by the British government and New Zealand took further action here by reintroducing petrol rationing in 1948. To ensure dollar imports were controlled, in October 1947 the government recalled and cut the 1948 import licensing schedule, restricting dollar expenditure to essentials unobtainable elsewhere. Business circles expressed concern at such measures, but as Nash told a delegation of traders in April 1948: "if we let the lid off there will be no more money in the United Kingdom next year".[20] Domestic wheat and coal production were also encouraged to limit hard currency imports and transport costs.[21]

The results of these policies were marked. New Zealand's imports from the Dollar Area dropped from $117 million in 1947 to $75 million in 1948.[22] In turn,

---

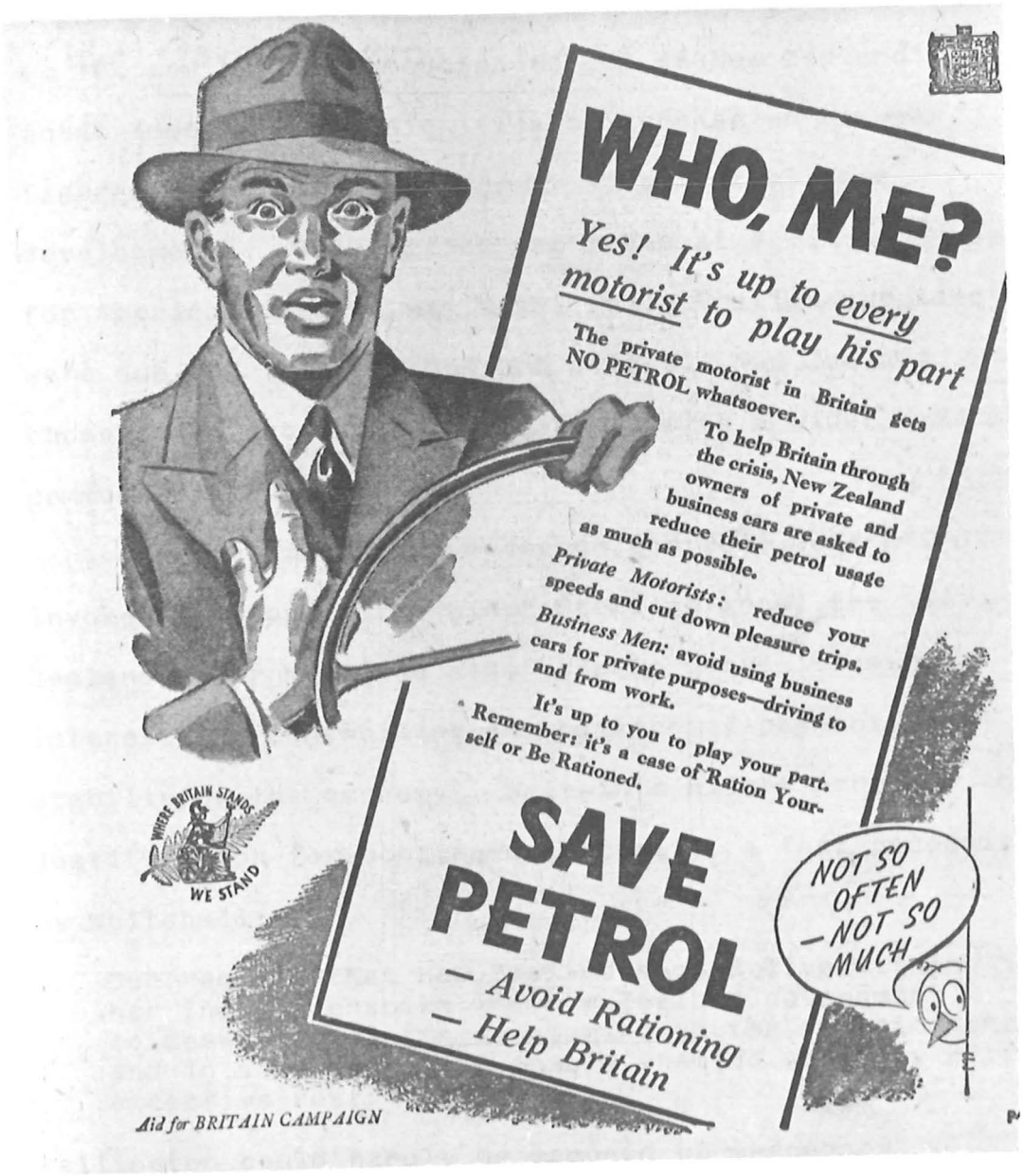
[18] Nash to Fraser, 31 August 1947, EA 59/2/102, pt.1; Round Table, December 1947, Vol. 38, No. 149, p.511.

[19] The Press, 3 October 1947.

[20] The Evening Post, 24 April 1948.

[21] McKinnon, pp.199-200.

[22] Minister of Finance to Minister of External Affairs, 14 July 1949, T61/3/5, pt.1.


WHO, ME?
Yes! It's up to every motorist to play his part
The private motorist in Britain gets NO PETROL whatsoever.
To help Britain through the crisis, New Zealand owners of private and business cars are asked to reduce their petrol usage as much as possible.
Private Motorists: reduce your speeds and cut down pleasure trips.
Business Men: avoid using business cars for private purposes—driving to and from work.
It's up to you to play your part. Remember: it's a case of Ration Yourself or Be Rationed.
SAVE PETROL
— Avoid Rationing
— Help Britain
NOT SO OFTEN — NOT SO MUCH
WHERE BRITAIN STANDS WE STAND
Aid for BRITAIN CAMPAIGN

imports from Britain for the same period increased by 10% and by 1950 amounted to 60% of New Zealand's total imports[23] - a significant increase on pre-war figures. The table on page 68 illustrates these developments. This action was taken at a time when demand for American imports was high, while British supplies were subject to shortages and delays. New Zealand, however, chose to balance its own interests with a wider economic commitment.

While import and exchange controls were primarily invoked to support the wider Sterling Area, the New Zealand government was also able to serve its own interests by controlling the balance of payments and stabilising the economy. Britain's plight provided the justification for continued austerity, a fact recognised by Whitehall:

> Our request that New Zealand should live within her income, enables the New Zealand government to answer criticism by blaming us for restrictions, and in some cases may enable them to get away with excessive restrictions.[24]

Wellington could hardly be accused of mercenary tactics, but there was a degree of mutual interest involved. And certainly, the government could restrict opposition attacks on a "socialist economy" by the appeal of aid to Britain. However, public resentment in the face of continued restrictions and controls did increase.[25]

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting in October 1948 provided the opportunity to assess recent

---

[23] N.Z. Official Year Book 1951-52, p.257.

[24] British Treasury Memo, 25 March 1948, quoted McKinnon, p.226.

[25] Sinclair, Walter Nash, p.273.

economic developments. A greater degree of confidence was evident, largely a result of the onset of the European Recovery Programme. Marshall Aid had helped stabilise the Sterling Area's reserves, but as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, emphasised, continued exchange control was essential. The Sterling Area's dollar deficit remained high and it was, therefore, necessary to try and maintain reserves of gold and dollars at about £500 million - not an easy task.[26] It was agreed that restrictive measures were essentially negative and that the ultimate solution was a return to open multi-lateral trading. But until Sterling Area finances were consolidated, full convertability was not an option.[27] Given the difficult economic climate, the meeting was particuarly concerned to ensure effective inter-Commonwealth consultation. Towards this end, it was proposed that Finance Ministers should meet periodically and that a "Commonwealth Economic Information Committee" should be established in London to serve as a "clearing house".[28]

The Sterling Area's dollar deficit for 1948 amounted to £438 million,[29] but a combination of Marshall Aid, continued austerity and increased exports to the United States allowed reserves to stabilise. However, in the second financial quarter of 1949, the deficit dramatically deteriorated to reach £157 million - an annual

---

[26] PMM(48) Minutes of second meeting, 11 October 1948 EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[27] PMM(48) Minutes of 6th meeting, 13 October 1948, ibid.

[28] PMM(48) Minutes of 7th meeting, 18 October 1948, ibid.

[29] PMM(48) Annex: Commonwealth Consultation ibid.;

basis of £628 million.[30] This was largely a consequence of recession in the United States' economy and a subsequent decrease in sterling imports. Rumours of an imminent sterling devaluation also fostered underhand currency transactions and encouraged American buyers to delay the purchase of sterling goods. As this mounting debt was unable to be covered by the European Recovery Programme, there was a further drain on gold and dollar reserves, which fell from £552 million in March 1948 to £406 million by 30 June 1949.[31] The graph on page 54 shows this dramatic decline. Urgent action was needed to halt the momentum of diminishing reserves, prompting the British government to call an emergency meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers in July.[32] Canada's presence meant that this would not be an exclusive Sterling Area affair, allowing a wider perspective.

A marked conflict of interest between an indebted Britain and its Commonwealth partners prevailed at the meeting. The British propounded that a further cut in dollar expenditure was essential if economic disaster was to be averted. As Cripps stressed, dollar reserves had now fallen to £385 million, compared to an annual dollar deficit of over £600 million; if the present drain continued reserves would soon be exhausted.[33]

Nash, NZPD, 20 September 1949, Vol. 287, p.2227.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Sterling Area Gold and Dollar Reserves, 14 January 1950, EA 154/7/3, pt.3.

[32] Attlee to Fraser, 18 June 1949; Cripps to Nash, 28 June 1949; Cripps to Nash, 3 July 1949, EA 154/7/3, pt.1.

[33] EMM(49) Minutes of 7th meeting, 15 July 1949; Minutes of 10th meeting, 16 July 1949, T61/3/5, pt.1.

Britain, therefore, declared its intention of reducing dollar imports for 1949-50 by a further 25% and recommended its Sterling Area partners take similar action.[34] Given the existing crisis, this was "a negative but indispensable operation".[35]

Despite an inherent commitment to Britain, the New Zealand delegation showed little enthusiasm for further dollar economies. Nash maintained that various factors meant that New Zealand would be unable to achieve the desired level of reduction. Firstly, the existing import licensing regime had to be honoured; no cuts could be made until 1950.[36] Secondly, New Zealand had already substantially reduced dollar imports; existing requirements were for essential capital imports such as steel, tinplate and agricultural machinery. £40 million had been drawn from the dollar pool to pay for these imports in 1948, but this expenditure was vital if agricultural production was to be increased, thereby ensuring food supplies for Britain.[37] Thirdly, Nash voiced concern that a reduction in American imports could aggravate international recession by increasing U.S. unemployment and encouraging economic reprisals.[38]

Alternatively, New Zealand raised the more positive proposal of increasing its exports to the Dollar Area.[39]

---

[34] EMM(49) Minutes of 7th meeting; Nash to Minister of External Affairs, 15 July 1949, T61/3/5, pt.1.

[35] Cripps to Nash, 3 July 1949, EA 154/7/3, pt.1.

[36] EMM(49) Minutes of 7th meeting, 15 July 1949; Minutes of 12th meeting, 18 July 1949, T61/3/5, pt.1.

[37] EMM(49) Minutes of 5th meeting, 14 July; Minutes of 6th meeting, 14 July, T61/3/5, pt.1; Nordmeyer to P.M. 29 August 1949, EA 59/2/102, pt.1 - emphasised that N.Z.'s annual requirement of 16,000 tons of fencing

However, this was a difficult prospect, given bulk purchasing contracts and intense public support for "Aid to Britain" - any diversion of exports to the United States would be at Britain's expense. It was also recognised that the North American market for butter and frozen meat was limited.[40] However, New Zealand maintained that increased dollar earnings was the most effective contribution it could make in the present crisis. A further possibility was to increase exports to other hard currency countries, such as Belgium and Switzerland. The borrowing of dollars was also considered.[41]

The meeting agreed that the fundamental objective was for the Sterling Area to trade its way out of difficulty by expanding dollar earnings.[42] This required increased efficiency and productivity, ensuring that Sterling Area goods would be competitive in dollar markets.[43] The ultimate aim was, therefore, the establishment of a single multi-lateral system of free trade. It was hoped that the

---

wire was primarily sourced from the U.S.

[38]Nash to Minister of External Affairs, 14 July 1949, T 61/3/5, pt.1.

[39]EMM(49) Minutes of 10th meeting, 16 July , T 61/3/5, pt.1.

[40]EMM(49) Minutes of 16th meeting, 21 July , T 61/3/5, pt.1.

[41]Ibid.

[42]EMM(49) 20 Final Text of Recommendations to Governments, 18 July 1949, EA 154/7/3, pt.1; Nash to Minister of External Affairs, 19 July 1949, T61/3/5, pt.1.

[43]The Economist blamed inefficient and uncompetitive British industries rather than U.S. recession for the exchange crisis, quoted The Dominion 12 July 1949.

forthcoming Tripartite Economic Discussions between Britain, the United States and Canada would make some progress towards an improving balance of trade with the Dollar Area. Immediate exigencies, however, precluded the ideal of a free trading system. Sterling Area reserves were declining at a dramatic rate, threatening financial collapse unless attrition was checked. Further short term dislocations seemed necessary if long term economic survival was to be assured. The delegations, therefore, agreed (albeit unenthusiastically) to recommend further dollar economies, comparable to the United Kingdom.[44] Existing import licences and essential import needs limited New Zealand's immediate capabilities, but it was resolved to review American imports for 1950.[45]

Surprisingly, the option of devaluation was not discussed by the Finance Ministers, despite widespread presumptions that such a measure was inevitable. Rumours of an imminent devaluation of sterling had, in fact, exacerbated the dollar crisis. However, at the first day of the Washington Economic Summit between the United States, Canada and Britain (7-12 September), Cripps privately revealed that London was intending to alter the sterling exchange rate.[46] The British had come to recognise that the prescribed 25% cut in dollar imports could not be achieved within 12 months, thereby requiring an alternative strategy.[47] Despite a commitment to

---

[44] EMM(49) Minutes of 12th meeting,18 July 1949, T61/3/5; EMM(49)20 Final Text of Recommendations to Governments , op.cit.

[45] EMM(49) Minutes of 12th meeting, 18 July 1949, T61/3/5, pt.1; NZPD,18 August 1949, Vol. 286, pp.1395-1397.

maximum consultation on economic matters, Britain did not concurrently inform its Commonwealth and Sterling Area partners of this proposal. The Dominions were not notified of London's decision to devalue the pound sterling by 30% until 17 September, one day before the official announcement. The British government recognised the short notice, but maintained that the final decision had only been taken.[48] But the disregard of the vested interests of others, seemingly contravened the precepts of Commonwealth consultation. Accordingly, there was some resentment, particularly from the Indian Finance Minister, who protested that Britain had "exceeded the brief" of the London conference.[49]

Certainly, Britain's action affected the rest of the Sterling Area, and with the exception of Pakistan, all members subsequently devalued their currencies by the same margin. In August 1948, the New Zealand pound had been revalued to parity with sterling and it was desired to retain this relationship. When announcing New Zealand's decision, Nash declared that:

> Having regard to the fact that nearly all our exports go to the United Kingdom and a large proportion of our imports are obtained from Britain, it is undoubtedly in the best interests of New Zealand to make no alteration in our existing rates with sterling.[50]

As the bulk of New Zealand's trade was confined to the Sterling Area the domestic impact of devaluation was

---

[46] Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to Minister of External Affairs, 2 October 1949, EA 154/7/3, pt.2.

[47] Cripps to Nash, 24 October 1949, EA 154/7/3, pt.2.

[48] Attlee to Fraser, 17 September 1949, EA 154/7/2, pt.1.

[49] The Statesman, 6 October 1949 - News clippings EA 154/7/2, pt.1.

limited. However, for the Sterling Area as a whole, the immediate results were marked. Currency stabilisation and more competitively priced exports saw the Sterling Area dollar deficit drop in the fourth quarter of 1949 to $31 million (£11 million) compared to $539 million (£134 million) in the previous quarter.[51] Gold and dollar reserves subsequently rose from a low of £330 million to £603 million (£416 million at the old rate of exchange).[52] A large proportion of this dramatic improvement was necessarily non-recurring, but the incentive to improve the Sterling Area's balance of trade had been made. For New Zealand's part, sales to the United States rose to 10% of total exports in 1950 compared to only 3.7% in 1949[53] - here was the positive approach to the dollar crisis in action.

II. TRADE TIES

New Zealand's principal form of economic support for Britain was the continued bulk supply of essential primary products at comparatively low prices. Bulk purchasing began as a wartime measure, whereby the British government became the sole purchaser of New Zealand's surplus foodstuffs. In turn, Britain's post-war shortage of both food and hard currency necessitated the provision of maximum supplies from the Sterling Area.

---

[50] Statement broadcast by Nash 19 September 1949, AJHR, B-18, Session 1949, Vol. 1, p.13.

[51] Press Conference by Cripps, 4 January 1950; Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to U.K. High Commissioner, Wellington, 4 January 1950, EA 154/7/3, pt.3.

[52] Ibid.

[53] N.Z. Official Year Book 1951-52, p.235.

Contracts for meat and dairy produce were thus renewed in 1944 and 1948, ultimately extending to 1955. A concerted effort was made to meet Britain's food demand; by the end of 1947, the volume of New Zealand's exports to the United Kingdom had increased 19% over pre-war levels.[54] As the table on page 68 shows, Britain remained New Zealand's near monopoly market, with the high point of 76.6% of total exports sent there in 1947.[55] While New Zealand received a stable and guaranteed market, costs were incurred - prices received were substantially below world rates, causing a deterioration in terms of trade, and rationing was maintained. Trade dependency was thus willingly reinforced.

Britain expressly requested New Zealand's support in providing maximum quantities of foodstuffs. The High Commissioner in Wellington, Sir Patrick Duff, played an effective role here by emphasising Britain's austerities to responsive audiences throughout the country.[56] In response to such publicity the voluntary "Food for Britain" organisation was established in 1946. As the dollar crisis mounted, Britain's reliance on New Zealand food supplies increased. Attlee emphasised this need in a personal telegram to Fraser, 12 August 1947:

> The level of foodstuffs in this country depends primarily upon the degree to which we are able to obtain supplies from other than hard currency sources ... Any steps which can be taken to increase and accelerate these supplies of meat, dairy produce and animal fats would be a contribution of the highest importance to the present crisis.[57]

---

[54] 'New Zealand's Contribution to Economic Recovery in Europe', 8 September 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[55] N.Z. Official Year Book 1951-52, p.235.

NEW ZEALAND'S EXPORTS: PRINCIPAL MARKETS EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

Year	U.K.	Other Commonwealth Countries	U.S.	Other Foreign Countries
1944	71.75	13.14	6.55	8.56
1945	72.28	13.29	9.84	4.59
1946	70.35	11.46	9.64	8.55
1947	76.66	7.52	6.35	9.47
1948	73.30	6.60	4.94	15.16
1949	73.39	6.05	3.75	16.81
1950	66.44	6.27	10.04	17.25

- N.Z. Official Year Book 1951-52, p.235

NEW ZEALAND'S IMPORTS: PRINCIPAL SOURCES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

Year	U.K.	Other Commonwealth Countries	U.S.	Other Foreign Countries
1944	40.38	23.79	32.23	3.06
1945	36.02	33.24	23.72	7.02
1946	47.77	29.10	16.41	6.72
1947	42.76	29.70	18.12	9.42
1948	52.33	26.36	10.78	10.53
1949	55.13	24.74	9.62	10.51
1950	60.10	21.47	7.26	11.17

- N.Z. Official Year Book 1951-52, p.257

New Zealand was also asked to keep its prices as low as possible.[58] The further possibility of contributing to greater Sterling Area self-sufficiency by developing timber and hydroelectric power resources was also considered.[59] However, the major capital expenditure involved, at a time of austerity, restricted this option to the long term.

Established trade dependency, coupled with strong emotional ties to the Mother Country, ensured New Zealand's active response to Britain's plight. To maximise food exports to Britain, rationing was maintained and still applied to dairy products at the time of the 1949 general election.[60] Peacetime austerity was unpopular but there was some solace in the knowledge that "our Kith and Kin" were the beneficiaries. The commitment to Britain was further highlighted by the National Aid for Britain Conference in August and September 1947. This brought 300 representatives of key sector groups (farmers, manufacturers, trade unions, shipping lines) together, to formulate ways of improving New Zealand's economic support for Britain.[61] The event can be compared to the fourth Labour Government's National Economic Summit, except that the focus was on another nation, albeit relative to New Zealand's own economic interests.

The conference agreed on the need to increase food production and to improve the efficiency of its

---

[56] Evening Post, 18 October 1946 - News clipping, EA 156/1/1, pt.2; McKinnon, p.210.

[57] Attlee to Fraser, 12 August 1947 EA 58/2/2/1, pt.2.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Sterling Area Development Working Party, 'New

despatch. A National Council was subsequently created (supported by regional organisations) and embarked upon a major publicity campaign, financed by a government grant of £20,000.[62] All New Zealand was called on to help Britain win the peace . The response was impressive: watersiders agreed to work longer hours to clear export backlogs; ration coupons were saved and communities made extensive food gifts; while numerous collections, bottle drives and cake stalls were held.[63] Charity in this case, did not begin at home.

Bulk purchasing was initially invoked as a wartime expediency, guaranteeing urgent supplies of primary products at prices relative to the costs of production. This, however, produced a severe deterioration in New Zealand's terms of trade as import prices rose rapidly, while domestic prices were contained and stabilised. When contracts were renewed in 1944 and 1946, some retrospective payments were made and price increases secured. But New Zealand's returns remained substantially below the prices paid to other suppliers. This disparity is shown in the following figures comparing Danish and New Zealand butter prices:

U.K. Price for Butter	N.Z. f.o.b. Sterling per cwt.	Denmark f.o.b. Sterling per cwt.
Pre-war (1935-39)	110/5d.	126/8d.
1944-45-46 average	150/6d.	236/-d.
1946-47	175/-d.	242/-d. (1947)
1947-48	205/-d.	321/6d. (1948) [64]

Zealand Development Projects',28 September 1948, T61/3/4/2.

[60]Meat rationing was removed in September 1948.

[61]'New Zealand and the Dollar Crisis', Round Table December 1947, Vol. 38, No. 149, p.511; NZPD,19 August 1948, Vol. 282, p.1608.

[62]Nash to Fraser,31 August 1947, EA 59/2/102, pt.1.

Compared to the small difference in returns between Denmark and New Zealand in the pre-war period, a marked price disparity had been achieved by 1948. Britain also purchased meat at higher prices from Argentina, Eire and Denmark. New Zealand, however, chose not to press for higher returns, aiming to help Britain at a time of crisis, in return for securing a stable and more prosperous long term market. As Fraser stated:

> I say that it was and is the right policy that we should not squeeze our Mother Country to the full extent that we might have done ... we do not regard what Britain pays to Denmark, the Argentine, or any other country, as the amount which we should demand.[65]

Negotiations to extend meat contracts for a further 7 years were concluded in July 1947 and for dairy produce in 1948.[66] In these contracts New Zealand agreed to increase overall dairy production by 20% and raise meat production by 50,000 tons by 1955.[67] The main reason for inserting these clauses (reminiscent of Soviet production quotas) was for publicity and it was hoped that New Zealand's example would encourage Australia to make similar arrangements. New Zealand officials privately conceded that it was unlikely that the targets would be reached, although increased production would still be achieved.[68] To give New Zealand greater parity with the world market, dairy and meat prices were increased for the 1948-49 season and thereafter subject to an annual review of 7.5%. In turn, New Zealand

---

[63] Ibid; McKinnon, p.211.

[64] 'New Zealand's Contribution to Economic Recovery in Europe', 8 September 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[65] NZPD, 28 September 1948, Vol. 283, p.2595.

[66] The Dairy Products Marketing Commission was

received the right to reserve a percentage of its dairy surplus for sale elsewhere. In August 1948, Wellington also revalued the New Zealand pound to parity with sterling,[69] thereby compensating for the unfavourable terms of trade - the alternative, Nash maintained, was to demand Britain pay higher prices.[70]

These developments showed that, despite a strong commitment to the United Kingdom, New Zealand was concerned to ensure a reasonable return for its exports; Aid to Britain had its limits. Certainly, given the higher returns available from dollar markets, there was some pressure to send more exports to North America[71] - a condition provided for in the 1948 dairy products contract. This would serve to earn valuable dollars and develop new markets, in anticipation of the end of bulk purchasing. But New Zealand made little serious effort in trade diversification, despite official recognition of the resulting benefits.

Various factors accounted for this reticence. Firstly, the continued primacy of the British market was undisputed. A report by the Aid forBritain National Council emphasised that there was no comparable market for New Zealand's cheese, butter or meat and that demand in North America was limited.[72] Secondly, there was

---

established in 1947 to conduct the negotiations.

[67] Sterling Area Development Working Party (48) 31, 'New Zealand Development Projects', 28 September 1948, T61/3/4/2.

[68] Talks between U.K. and N.Z. Officials on Economic Matters, 20 February 1950, EA 50/2/2/4, pt.1.

[69] In 1933 the N.Z.£ had been devalued by 25% in relation to Sterling.

[70] Sinclair, Walter Nash, p.273.

concern with the vagaries of the wider international market, contrasted by the reliability of Britain. Thirdly, New Zealand was committed to providing maximum assistance to the beleaguered Mother Country, particularly as the dollar crisis mounted in 1949; any diversion of exports to other markets would be at Britain's expense. Finally, public opinion was unsympathetic to trade diversification. For example, considerable hostility resulted in 1946, when it was agreed (with Britain's approval) to divert a small amount of butter to American troops in the North Pacific - watersiders even refused to load the goods.[73]

The continuance of bulk purchasing and the drive to increase food supplies to the United Kingdom also worked against the greater diversification of the New Zealand economy. In effect, the immediate post-war years saw the nation's traditional role as Britain's overseas farm reinforced. There was some concern that potential economic progress was being impeded. At the Prime Ministers' Meeting in 1948, Fraser asserted that New Zealand's prosperity could not be maintained by primary production alone. Considerable industrialisation had been achieved before the war and this, Fraser maintained, must continue.[74] Parallel development in both agriculture and industry was required. This did not correspond to Britain's interests - the continued

---

[71] Central Economic Planning Staff 'Export Policy in Relation to Potential Dollar Earners', 1 October 1948, T61/3/4/2.

[72] McKinnon, p.274.

[73] McKinnon, pp.270-271.

[74] PMM(48) Minutes of 5th meeting, 13 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

supply of bulk, cheap foodstuffs and the conservation of Sterling Area reserves. The opportunity for greater economic diversification was thus reduced.

III. BRITAIN AND EUROPE

A marked feature of the post-war environment was the increased economic co-operation between Britain and its European neighbours, paralleling closer defence ties. This was highlighted by the formation of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation in 1948 to administer Marshall Plan aid. Britain played a leading role in the OEEC, contributing 30% of the budget and advocating proposals to liberalise European trade.[75] The United States also pushed for closer European economic integration as an essential part of the recovery programme. New Zealand welcomed efforts to promote European recovery and prosperity, recognising that this would be to its own economic benefit.[76] However, there was concurrent concern that the "Western Union" would conflict with the established economic ties of the Commonwealth and Sterling Area. The spectre of a European Customs Union was of particular concern. New Zealand's sensitivities were expressed in the Speech from the Throne, 22 June 1948:

> My government are confident that a closer economic, defensive and spiritual union of the United Kingdom

---

[75] External Affairs Paper, 'The Commonwealth and the European Union', 1949, EA 153/28/5, pt.1.

[76] Annual Report of Department of External Affairs 1947-48, AJHR, 1948, A-1, p.28.

> and Europe, which they regard as necessary and desirable, can be achieved without prejudicing the historic unity of the nations of the British Commonwealth.[77]

Britain was, therefore, expected to balance its responsibilities.

New Zealand was forthright in defending its economic interests against perceived European competition. For example, at the 1948 Prime Ministers' Meeting, Fraser expressed concern that Britain was sending large quantities of capital goods to Europe at New Zealand's expense.[78] There was also concern that the development needs of the new Commonwealth members in Asia would be neglected if Britain's economic interests became too European-centred. This could threaten the "dissolution of the Commonwealth relationship".[79] Alarm was also raised at the proposal of an Intra-European payments system, pooling European reserves under a similar arrangement to the Sterling Area. New Zealand balked at the prospect of its sterling reserves being incorporated into such a system.[80] It was argued that New Zealand had already made a major contribution to Europe's economic rehabilitation - £12.5 million had been granted to Britain in reduced sterling balances; £5 million had been given to France as a wool credit; and the continuance of bulk purchasing helped to ease Britain's huge balance of payments deficit. Further

---

[77] NZPD, 22 June 1948, Vol. 280, p.2.

[78] PMM(48) Minutes of 5th meeting, 13 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1; Treasury Paper, 'Bilateral Agreements', 15 October 1948, T61/3/4/2.

[79] External Affairs Paper, 'The Commonwealth and the European Union', 1949, EA 153/28/5, pt.1.

[80] Treasury Papers, 'Economic Aspects of Western

contributions to a wider European fund were seen as an excessive strain.[81]

The area of major concern was the question of a European Customs Union and the consequent threat to imperial preference. Britain reassured the New Zealand delegation at the 1948 Prime Ministers' Meeting that this was not a practical possibility in the foreseeable future.[82] Britain actively relied on the economic support provided by Commonwealth nations like New Zealand, while trade with the Commonwealth more than doubled that with Europe.[83] London subsequently rejected proposals in 1949 that restricted private import licensing to OEEC countries.[84] While Britain increasingly recognised its role as a European country, imperial economic links remained decisive. As Cripps stated at the OEEC Meeting in Paris, November 1949:

> We could not integrate our economy into that of Europe in any manner that would prejudice the full discharge of these other responsibilities (i.e. the Commonwealth and Sterling Area) ... Yet, at the same time, we regard ourselves as bound up with Western Europe ...[85]

However, this balance still tipped in the Commonwealth's favour, ensuring that any moves by Britain towards greater economic co-operation with Europe would be substantially qualified.

Union', 'Contributions to Intra-European Payments Plan', 'European Recovery Programme: N.Z.'s Attitude' 1948, T61/3/4/2.

[81] Ibid.

[82] PMM(48) Minutes of 6th Meeting, 13 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[83] External Affairs Paper, 'The Commonwealth and the European Union', 1949, EA 153/28/5, pt.1.

[84] External Affairs Paper, 'The U.K.'s Interest in Europe and the Commonwealth', 1949, EA 153/28/5, pt.1.

With the assurance that its own economic interests were secure, New Zealand was able to endorse Britain's increased European ties. The rehabilitation of a stable and prosperous continent would provide New Zealand with more export markets and foster a more balanced international trading environment. It was also recognised that Britain provided war-ravaged Europe with effective leadership and direction, without Britain's involvement the potential for further instability was seen to increase.[86] The fate of Europe and the Commonwealth had long been intertwined and in the uncertainty of the post-war world, this symbiosis was increasingly apparent. New Zealand thus supported:

> any sound schemes for European economic co-operation and of working concurrently for the rapid economic development of the Commonwealth, it being recognised that both these courses should concentrate to the solution of our economic difficulties with the Dollar Area.[87]

Established economic dependency and a strong commitment to help the Mother Country win the peace saw New Zealand give active economic support to Britain in the post-war period. The trading relationship and membership of the Sterling Area meant that New Zealand's economic interests were bound up with Britain. New Zealand thus maintained a war economy whereby the exigencies of exchange control, consumption restrictions, bulk purchasing and rationing continued. These policies

---

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

incurred continued austerities and sacrifices, though New Zealand made clear that there were limits to its contribution; national prosperity and development needs had to be considered. New Zealand was ultimately, of course, helping Britain to help itself. However, by 1950, New Zealand's actions had served to reinforce and strengthen economic dependency, maintaining a colonial economy.

CHAPTER III

CONSTITUTIONAL CLEAN UPS AND INNOVATIONS: THE PARADOX OF DEFINING NEW ZEALAND'S STATUS IN THE INTERESTS OF COMMONWEALTH UNITY

> Without our Mother Country and without the strength that unity means among our countries, our sovereignty would count for little.
>
> - Peter Fraser NZPD, 28 September 1948, Vol. 283, p.2592.

New Zealand's adoption of the Statute of Westminster in 1947 and the introduction of New Zealand citizenship in 1948 would, on first assumption, be regarded as assertions of a greater national identity. However, despite long term and symbolic implications, this was not the case in the contemporary context. Instead, these 'innovations' in constitutional status were essentially aimed at fostering Commonwealth unity rather than nationalist aspirations. While proud of its independent nationhood, New Zealand equally cherished the ties of the British Commonwealth. Unlike Canada or South Africa, there was less concern with explicitly advertising the legalistic and technical fine points of sovereignty.

Both developments have to be seen in the wider context of inter-Commonwealth relations. In the case of the adoption of the Statute of Westminster, New Zealand belatedly achieved official parity of status with the other members of the Commonwealth. This gave full legislative

competency, removing certain technical anomalies and bringing legal status into line with convention. In turn, New Zealand citizenship was part of a Commonwealth-wide formula of maintaining the common status of the British subject, while allowing individual Dominions the right to define their own citizenships. But, while both of these actions were significant, there was no fundamental change to the established fact of New Zealand's sovereignty, rather the legal confirmation of accepted practice. Consequently, there was little accompanying publicity. Clearly, to New Zealand, the practicalities of independence were more important than embellishments.

I. THE STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER

The adoption of the operative sections of the Statute of Westminster in November 1947[1] (16 years after its initial passage through the British parliament) and the subsequent passing of the New Zealand Constitution (Amendment) Act by the United Kingdom,[2] officially gave New Zealand full legislative sovereignty. In practical significance, this was not a constitutional landmark, but a much delayed denouement of convenience. New Zealand had long enjoyed the actual status of independent nationhood. However, through the quirks of the British constitutional system, legal forms lagged behind convention. Thus, certain restrictions (largely outdated but still legally functional) remained in the General Assembly's legislative competency.

---

[1] N.Z. Statutes, 1947, 11 Geo. VI, No. 38, pp.347-51.

[2] II Geo. VI, Ch.4.

The removal of this residual imperial prerogative was a logical step to clarify and enlarge independence. Previous conservative governments had opposed the Statute of Westminster's adoption, arguing it would be a prelude to the Empire's disintegration. But that a reformist Labour government waited 12 years before enactment is seemingly puzzling. However, the complexities of circumstance atone for this. Essentially, the Statute of Westminster was a pre-war matter that for various reasons New Zealand deferred to a post-war resolution. But in doing so, by 1947 the Statute had itself become anachronistic, superseded by new developments in the post-war Commonwealth.

As passed in 1931, the Statute of Westminster was a product of the "inter-war Commonwealth", the period of the clarification of "Dominion status". Essentially, it gave legal form to the confirmed sovereignty of the Dominions as enshrined in the "Balfour Report" of 1926:

> They are autonomous communities within the British Empire equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic and external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.[3]

Inconsistencies in Dominion legislative ability compared to this formula were made apparent at the 1929 Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation and Merchant Shipping Legislation.

In response, the final draft of the Statute of Westminster, as approved at the 1930 Imperial Conference, gave the Dominions full legislative power in areas still nominally subject to the United Kingdom's prerogative.

---

[3]Quoted N. Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience (London, 1969), p.232.

Firstly, the restrictions of repugnancy that invalidated Dominion laws contrary to or already covered by United Kingdom legislation were removed, as were the largely obsolete laws of reservation that allowed Britain to stall certain areas of Dominion legislation, notably merchant shipping. Secondly, it was declared that Dominion parliaments had full power to legislate extra-territorially. The inability to extend jurisdiction outside Dominion territory was contentious, but had been upheld in New Zealand by the Court of Appeal. The courts could argue that under section 53 of the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852, the General Assembly only had the competency "to make laws for the peace, order and good government of New Zealand".[4] Hence, the courts had ruled against New Zealand laws applying to the mandated territory of Western Samoa[5] and to crimes committed outside the Dominion.[6] Thirdly, it was stipulated that United Kingdom legislation would only extend to the Dominions on their specific request and consent. These legal clarifications made clear the actual divisibility of the Crown and the existence of independent nations - albeit in a special relationship.

The Forbes government regarded this development as unnecessary and even dangerous, threatening the cherished ideal of imperial unity. The prospect of "a loose alliance of 6 nations under one titular head" was an anathema.[7] While New Zealand had adopted the official title

---

[4] 15 and 16 Vict., C.72.

[5] Tagaloa v. The Inspector of Police 1927 - a special Imperial Order in Council was necessary to enforce New Zealand jurisdiction in Western Samoa.

[6] For example, R. v. Lander 1929, bigamy committed in Britain was ruled not punishable in New Zealand.

of Dominion in 1907, governments showed no enthusiasm for the finer points of independence within the British Commonwealth. After all, New Zealand had effective control over its own affairs while also having the security of a place within the Empire . Dominion status could thus be enjoyed without making an issue of remnants of imperial authority. New Zealand, therefore, (in league with Australia and New Foundland) added a clause to the Statute of Westminster ensuring that its provisions would not apply until domestic parliamentary adoption (section 10). In turn, New Zealand's capacity to alter its constitution remained under the limits of existing legislation (section 8).

While the General Assembly approved the Statute of Westminster on 23 July 1931 (thereby allowing its passage through the British parliament), New Zealand remained outside its application - though by implication accepting the preamble and non-operative sections. Prime Minister Forbes made clear his policy was "rather to deprecate than assist in the crystallizing of the powers and duties involved in what is known as Dominion status".[8] In fact, Forbes threatened to sabotage the Statute's final passage through the British parliament in November 1931, over last minute objections to wording that alluded to New Zealand's support for the enactment.[9] The Labour opposition resoundly criticised the government's stance as ignoring the reality

---

[7] N.Z. Report on the Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation and Merchant Shipping Legislation 1930, p.17 EA 159/1/5 Pt. 1.

[8] NZPD, 22 July 1931, Vol. 228, pp.548-49.

[9] For documentary detail of the ensuing controversy see EA 159/1/5 Pt. 2.

of Commonwealth development and languishing in inferiority status. Here was clearly the "reluctant Dominion" as eloquently described by J.C. Beaglehole:

> New Zealand got responsible government ... became a titular Dominion, was dragged into Dominion status, stood by and saw the Statute of Westminster passed. But once it had got essential control of its own affairs, it was not really interested in constitutional evolution; or rather its interest was that of rigid disapproval. It is a 'Dominion' in spite of itself.[10]

Labour's victory at the 1935 election heralded a government sympathetic to achieving complete parliamentary sovereignty. There was expectation, given past statements, of positive action being taken here. In a private letter to Savage 11 May 1936, Herbert Evatt (still a High Court judge though a leading Australian Labour Party official) urged the new government to set an example and adopt the Statute. He forcefully argued that this was necessary to fulfil Dominion sovereignty. Evatt was scathing of New Zealand's past attitude:

> New Zealand has been regarded as being 'more imperial than the imperialists'. Why this should be in the country of Seddon and also of Savage and Nash I fail to understand.[11]

Yet the Statute of Westminster's operative sections were not to be invoked until November 1947. This reticence was attributable to the problems of circumstance and technicality, rather than reactionary policy. The government's priorities of action were domestic social and economic

---

[10] J.C. Beaglehole, 'New Zealand and the Commonwealth: An Attempt at Objectivity', Contemporary New Zealand (Wellington, 1938) pp.2-3.

[11] EA 159/1/5, pt.2.

reform rather than constitutional fine points. Thus, despite certain limitations on legislative capacity, practical disadvantages were minimal and could be surmounted by British legislation authorising the New Zealand parliament specific rights. In turn, it was recognised that the symbolic effect of adopting the Statute would give the opposition scope for accusations of Commonwealth disloyalty and reforming with undue haste.[12] Adoption was a matter that would be dealt with, but in due course. Peter Fraser later stated that without the outbreak of war, legislation would have been invoked no later than 1940.[13]

The Second World War certainly provided a major contributing factor to the Statute's hibernation in official channels. The government was undisposed to take any legislative action that could be misconstrued as weakening Commonwealth cohesion and aiding enemy propaganda.[14] Yet, concurrently, the war also highlighted the legislative limitations resulting from remnants of colonial subordination. The apparent inability to legislate for extra-territorial effect meant that New Zealand laws did not officially apply to those serving overseas. Consequently, special United Kingdom legislation allowing this had to be requested.[15] That such an inconvenient and complicated process was required - especially in the emergency of war - gave credence to the proponents of adoption.

---

[12] A. Ross, 'New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster', The First British Commonwealth: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Mansergh (London. 1980), p.151.

[13] NZPD, 7 November 1947, Vol. 279, p.533.

The Australian government used this issue of wartime expediency to justify adopting the Statute of Westminster in October 1942. This provided the obvious impetus for New Zealand to follow suit. Evatt had turned the tables around from 1936, he now expected New Zealand to follow Australia's example.[16] In response, the Parliamentary Law Draftsman, Dartrey Adams, inquired if a similar New Zealand bill was desired.[17] The government were aware of the advantages but were less disposed to take action at a serious juncture of the war than the aggressive Evatt.

Paradoxically, New Zealand's failure to adopt the Statute restricted areas of domestic sovereignty, while independence in external affairs was unaffected. This was a consequence of the Crown's personal prerogative in international relations, free from the constraints of statutory law. Thus the Labour government had declared war against the Axis powers, enjoyed the right to conclude treaties, sent and received diplomatic legations and had pursued a conspicuously independent pre-war foreign policy. But without the Statute's grant of official sovereignty, New Zealand's independence could be misunderstood and challenged in the wider international environment. For

---

[14] Attorney General to Law Draftsman H.D.C. Adams , 30 November 1943, EA 159/1/5 pt. 2.

[15] Section 5,Emergency Powers (Defence) Act 1939; Section 187c,The Army and Airforce Act 1940.

[16] Evatt apparently strongly pressed Fraser on the matter at the Canberra Conference 1944.

[17] Memo,H.D.C. Adams to Permanent Head P.M.'s Department,25 November 1942, EA 159/1/5 pt. 2.

example, in the United States Senate debate on the proposed post-war security organisation, 25 October 1943, New Zealand's status as a "free and sovereign nation" (a prerequisite for membership) was questioned because of the non-ratification of the Statute of Westminster.[18] In the wake of such controversy, an official report concluded that foreign misconceptions would be clarified "by the removal of that unnecessary source of misunderstanding, the bogey of New Zealand's adoption of the Statute of Westminster."[19] Ironically, it seemed there was as much concern in rectifying misunderstanding of New Zealand's international status (technically unaffected by the Statute) as with removing the actual legal restrictions.

Government resolve was apparent by late November 1943, with Adams instructed to prepare legislation, largely for "matters of convenience".[20] An adoption bill was ready by the 1944 parliamentary session and the Vice-Regal Speech from the Throne announced the intention to proceed with the Statute's enactment.[21] The Governor-General presented three essential justifications: ensuring Commonwealth uniformity; removing foreign doubts over New Zealand's sovereign status; and eliminating administrative complications. Academic viewpoints added further weight to the cause of adoption, with a series of lectures at Victoria University

---

[18] Charge d'Affaires New Zealand Delegation, Washington to Minister of External Affairs, 27 October 1943, EA 159/1/5 pt.2.

[19] Memorandum: 'The International and Constitutional Status of New Zealand', C.C. Aikman, 1943, p.6 EA 159/1/5 pt. 2.

[20] Attorney General to Law Draftsman, 30 November 1943, EA 159/1/5 pt. 2.

[21] NZPD, 22 February 1944, Vol. 264, p.7.

College April-May 1944.[22] The continuing reality of unnecessary legislative restriction was emphasised here:

> these examples of extra-territoriality and repugnancy present a picture of legislative muddle and confusion. Since it has been agreed that New Zealand and the United Kingdom are equal in status, the legislative incapacity of New Zealand has been illogically, even perversely, persisted in.[23]

Even the popular press showed an increasing awareness, with a Truth headline December 1943 - "N.Z. Still Clings to Mother's Strings".[24]

However, despite the Crown's forthright statement of impending legislative action, the Statute remained in cold storage. This resulted from the further complicating factor that mere adoption would not remove all the New Zealand parliament's legislative incapacities. Most significantly, the power to repeal or amend certain entrenched sections of the 1852 New Zealand Constitution Act[25] was prevented by the 1857 Amendment Act.[26] Section 8 of the Statute of Westminster upheld that adoption would not remove this restriction. Thus, parallel to invoking the Statute, a request for United Kingdom legislation conferring the New Zealand parliament's full power of constitutional amendment would be required.[27] Arguably,

---

[22] Written transcripts published as New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster, J.C. Beaglehole (ed.) (Wellington, 1944).

[23] R.O. McGeehan 'Status and Legislative Inability' in Ibid., p.97.

[24] New Zealand Truth, December 29, 1943.

[25] 15 and 16 Vict. C.72.

[26] 20 and 21 Vict. C.53.

[27] Emphasised by Adams in Memo to P.M., 8 February 1944, EA 159/1/5 pt. 2.

unlike federal Canada and Australia, New Zealand's unitary constitution did not need the safeguard of Westminster residual power to ensure state or provincial rights.[28] While Section 5 of the Colonial Laws Validity Act 1865 stated that "representative legislatures may alter their constitutions", this was not seen to override the restrictions of the 1857 Act. In any case, Section 2 of the Statute of Westminster repealed this legislation. To dispel any controversy, it was deemed necessary to have parliamentary powers of constitutional amendment confirmed in clear and absolute terms by Britain.

Interestingly, there was also some concern raised over the possible effect of the Statute of Westminster's adoption on the Treaty of Waitangi and jurisdiction over the Maori people. In response, the Crown Solicitor, A.E. Currie, declared that while the Treaty was symbolically important, it was not in itself part of New Zealand law and therefore unaffected by constitutional changes.[29] It was noted that Section 71 of the 1852 Constitution Act enabled the Crown by letters patent to create a system of "indirect rule" in areas of established Maori lands and customs. But no such system had been applied and would, in any case, be

---

[28] Ironically, Canada, "the premier Dominion", did not domicile its constitution until 1982, over 30 years after "the most reluctant Dominion". New Zealand was spared the greater constitutional complexities of federalism.

[29] Currie to Permanent Head P.M.'s Dept, 24 February 1944, 'The Treaty of Waitangi and the Statute of Westminster', EA 159/1/5, pt.2.

repugnant to New Zealand law. Maoris were clearly not distinct subjects of the British monarch, but under the sovereignty of the New Zealand government. Given recent attempts by Maori activists to give the Treaty of Waitangi some legal standing, this is an interesting area.

Awareness that the unilateral adoption of the Statute of Westminster would not provide the panacea of legislative autonomy, complicated the situation for New Zealand. As the Attorney General Rex Mason declared: "If the adoption of the Statute does not bring us full constitutional power, there is the possibility, even the likelihood, that the result will be a definite loss of constitutional power".[30] An agreement with Britain for dual legislative action was therefore required. Fraser resolved to raise this matter personally when in London for the Prime Ministers' Meeting, May 1944.[31] It appeared that simple ends could only be achieved by complex means.

New Zealand's case was clearly put to the British government, supported by a large corpus of memoranda and Adams' draft constitution amendment bill. Fraser emphasised in discussions with Dominions Secretary Lord Cranborne that here "was a matter which should have been cleared up much earlier".[32] British officials were sympathetic and "surprised and interested to learn that Section 8 took away with one hand what it gave in the other".[33] However, for Britain the vital issue was the "matter of timing"[34] and

---

[30]Attorney General to P.M., 5 April 1944, EA 159/1/5 pt.3.

[31]Report on meeting in P.M.'s Office, 9 March 1944, EA 159/1/5 pt. 3.

[32]Report, Sir Eric Machtig to Sir Harry Batterbee, 29 June 1944, D.O 35 1245/C235/3.

[33]McIntosh to Shanahan, 24 May 1944, EA 159/1/5 pt.3.

it was deemed undesirable to legislate for New Zealand in the existing circumstances. The Dominions Office presented two mitigating factors. Firstly, the well used contention that enemy propaganda would present New Zealand as cutting Commonwealth ties, especially in the wake of an important Prime Ministers' meeting. Such an argument was not particularly credible given Australian actions in 1942.

But, secondly, and of decisive importance, was the fact that the British government did not wish to raise New Zealand's constitutional status in parliament, thereby provoking debate on wider inter-Commonwealth relations.[35] Adams' draft bill included reference to the need for Commonwealth uniformity over the laws of royal succession and titles, and the oath of allegiance. These matters would be particularly embarrassing to Britain in regard to Eire's tenuous status in the Commonwealth - an area "best allowed to slumber".[36] Concern was also expressed over legislating in a matter of potential controversy in New Zealand. Thus, while both governments agreed to the form of action required, it was resolved to postpone legislation until a more convivial date. Had Fraser forced the issue, Britain would have had to comply, but Commonwealth goodwill prevailed.

Essentially a pre-war issue, with the official groundwork concluded during the war, New Zealand's official achievement of full sovereignty had to wait for a post-war

---

[34] Machtig to Batterbee, op. cit.

[35] Memo, C.W. Dixon, 1 June 1944, DO 35 1245/C235/3.

[36] Ibid.

resolve. New Zealand's status as a sovereign and independent nation had been illustrated beyond doubt in the war and the desirability of formally capping this with complete legislative competence was apparent. It was also evident that post-war responsibilities in the Pacific (as envisaged by the Canberra Pact) necessitated full extra-territorial jurisdiction. Trusteeship obligations in Western Samoa (administrative authority still derived from the United Kingdom Foreign Jurisdiction Act) also needed a firmer base. In fact, while the apparent limitations on extra-territoriality remained, New Zealand's ability to legislate in a whole gamut of areas was in doubt - shipping, fishing, air navigation, smuggling, deportation, dependent territories, et al.[37]

But British recalcitrance was still evident. When Fraser arrived in London, January 1946, for the first General Assembly of the United Nations, Lord Addison, the Dominions Secretary, was advised that a full legislative programme left no room to act on New Zealand's behalf. The Dominions Office further argued that they were "by no means convinced that the complementary United Kingdom legislation which Mr Fraser seeks is really essential in order to enable New Zealand to achieve their purpose".[38] This view was directly contrary to the agreement of 1944. Continued concern at fuelling controversy over inter-Commonwealth relations accounted for this unenthusiasm.

---

[37] 'Summary of Reasons for which New Zealand Should Adopt the Statute of Westminster', 28 June 1946, EA 159/1/5 pt.3.

[38] Memo, Sir Eric Machtig, 21 February 1946, DO 35 1245/C235/3.

However, the New Zealand government had no wish to further delay legislation. Officials were busy behind the scenes compiling the well established arguments in favour of adoption.[39] Fraser announced to the House 16 August 1946, the intention of setting up a select committee to report on the whole constitutional process involved.[40] This body was not, in the event, established, although the Statutes Revision Committee examined the matter. Adams and Foss Shanahan appeared before the Committee to advance the case for legislative action. They stressed the logic of removing outdated restrictions. For example, Adams pointed out the ridiculous situation that murders committed when travelling to New Zealand would be outside the jurisdiction of the courts, through extra-territorial restriction.[41] Surprisingly, Opposition members of the Committee were cool towards such arguments. In fact, the National Party's 1946 election manifesto expressly stated the desire "to retain all links binding the Empire together and therefore does not propose adopting the Statute of Westminster at the present juncture".[42] Yet, paradoxically, another of National's election platforms - the abolition of the Legislative Council - could not be achieved without amending an entrenched section of the 1852 Constitution Act. Shanahan and Adams were aware of this, but diplomatic tact restrained them from pointing out National's inconsistency.[43]

---

[39] McIntosh to Crow, 27 May 1946, EA 159/1/5 pt.3.

[40] NZPD, 16 August 1946, Vol. 274, p.293.

[41] Shanahan to McIntosh, 3 October 1946, EA 159/1/5 pt.3.

The ongoing problem of finding accord with Britain over the New Zealand Constitution was largely resolved during Adams' visit to London for the Conference on Nationality and Citizenship, March 1947.[44] Discussions with British officials resulted in Adams' draft United Kingdom amendment bill being revised and concluded to the satisfaction of both parties. The British wanted the legislation to be concise and uncontroversial and suggested replacing the broad declaratory statement that the New Zealand parliament had the power to make any constitutional change, with the simple repeal of the 1857 amendment act, thereby allowing full amending power. The British government now agreed to legislate on New Zealand's behalf when parliament convened in October 1947.[45] Fraser could at last proceed.

The National opposition unwittingly played into the government's hands here, with Sidney Holland reviving his hobby horse - the abolition of the Legislative Council.[46] The Opposition had not done their legal homework and gave the government the perfect opportunity to finally resolve the whole drawn out issue, without the implication of

---

[42] N.Z. National Party Policy - General Election 1946 EA 159/1/5 pt.3.

[43] Shanahan to McIntosh, op. cit.

[44] The prospect of enacting individual citizenships within the Commonwealth, further necessitated the removal of extra-territorial constraint and repugnancy.

[45] Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Fraser, 28 March 1947, EA 159/1/5, pt.3.

[46] Legislative Council Abolition Bill NZPD, 5 August 1947, Vol. 277, pp.123-29.

Commonwealth disloyalty. As Attorney General Mason clearly argued, New Zealand's bi-cameral parliament was entrenched in the 1852 Constitution Act and could not be altered by domestic statute.[47] Amending the constitution act did not necessarily require adopting the Statute of Westminster (Britain could legislate for New Zealand's right to do so), but as Fraser convincingly argued, a full attainment of legislative authority was preferable to piecemeal actions.[48] Otherwise, New Zealand would be continually going back to the British parliament when other restrictions needed overcoming. Holland's motion was thus amended that before any change was made to the legislature "the Statute of Westminster be extended to this Dominion, and that a bill ... be introduced during the present session of parliament". Fraser could not have stage-managed the situation better.

Subsequently, dual legislation - adopting the Statute of Westminster and requesting Britain's repeal of the 1857 Constitution Amendment Act - was introduced to the House, 19 September 1947. In the second reading, 7 November, Fraser strongly presented the previously stalled policy.[49] New Zealand's sovereign nationhood, he argued, was an established fact, necessitating the removal of anomalous legislative incapacities. Such restrictions were anachronistic legacies and contentious or already redundant in their continued application - "Why keep the deadweight

---

[47] NZPD, 6 August 1947, Vol. 277, pp.202-03.

[48] Ibid., p.212.

[49] NZPD, 7 November 1947, Vol. 279, pp.531-36.

and unnecessary formula?" The present situation also created difficulties in certain areas of legislation and needed rectifying. Fraser was at pains to emphasise there could be no lessening of New Zealand's ties to Britain and the Commonwealth - in fact, New Zealand would cease to be the "odd Dominion out" and be brought into line with the other members.

Opposition response was a curious mixture of uncompromising imperialism (as represented by External Affairs spokesman Frederick Doidge) and a more reasoned approach (as shown by T.C. Webb and R.M. Algie). Doidge, National's arch-imperialist ("with us loyalty to the Motherland is an instinct as deep as religion")[50] basically recycled the conservative arguments put forward since 1930, though by 1947 such contentions were clearly reactionary. He opposed adoption "largely on grounds of sentiment", still maintaining that the Statute provided "a legal bill of divorcement".[51] New Zealand, he further contended, suffered few disadvantages or constraints without the Statute and had little to gain practically. However, it appeared that Doidge was play acting the role of the hardline imperialist for his own satisfaction. His colleagues did not endorse his views and there was no parliamentary division. Other National members, while unenthusiastic, showed a realistic acceptance - "the case for the adoption of the Statute is stronger than the case against it".[52] R.M. Algie actually refuted Doidge's claims,

---

[50] NZPD, 7 November 1947, Vol. 279, p.538.

[51] Ibid., pp.535-38.

[52] T.C. Webb, Ibid., p.543.

rather than "cutting the painter ... it was the Old Land herself who handed us the weapons to do the cutting."[53] It was realistically recognised that Commonwealth unity derived from the willingness of the independent members not laws. Both bills were duly passed without division 25 November 1947. The New Zealand Constitution (Amendment) Bill subsequently sailed through the United Kingdom parliament with New Zealand receiving uniform praise and goodwill.[54]

New Zealand's final achievement of official sovereign status was accepted without controversy or reaction. Protests were limited to the lunatic fringe and extreme imperialists. An example of this was a letter declaiming that the Statute's adoption would tear New Zealand away from the divine protection of the British constitution as derived from the God-given "rock of ages".[55] To most New Zealanders there was no tangible change in the country's status and complex constitutional matters were not of concern. In contrast to the indignation of 1931, in 1947 there was near universal consensus that as an independent nation, New Zealand deserved full sovereign status. Thus, the final adoption of the Statute of Westminster was primarily important in confirming and symbolising New Zealand's proudly held independence in the post-war world. At the

---

[53] Ibid., p.551.

[54] The Third Labour Government in 1973 further amended the N.Z. Constitution Act removing remaining anachronisms and making absolutely clear that New Zealand laws had extra-territorial effect by replacing the words in Section 53 - "to make laws for the peace, order and good government of New Zealand" with "power to make laws having effect in, or in respect of, New Zealand or any other part thereof and laws having effect outside New Zealand". N.Z. Statutes, 1973 No. 114.

same time, interdependence within the British Commonwealth was accepted without question. New Zealand enjoyed the symbiosis of independence and Commonwealth ties without contradiction. But ironically, due to New Zealand's delayed adoption, by 1947 "the Statute of Westminster Era" of the Commonwealth was over. New Zealand achieved official "Dominion Status" to find the term an anachronism, subsequently replaced as the Commonwealth's composition and focus changed.

II. NEW ZEALAND CITIZENSHIP

In contrast to the drawn out process of adopting the Statute of Westminster, the introduction of a specific New Zealand citizenship in 1948 was a quickly resolved matter. While a logical derivative of full sovereign status, this was not a self-conscious declaration of national identity. Instead, it was part of a concerted inter-Commonwealth formula to retain the uniformity of the status of British subject, while recognising the individual citizenship of member nations. Unlike the uncompromising stance of earlier administrations to the Statute of Westminster, the Labour government agreed to support Commonwealth consensus here. As a result, the basis of nationality shifted from the "common code" of the universality of being a British subject to the precedence of individual national citizenship. This was a significant change in principle and was received in New Zealand with a degree of reluctance. However, the practical consequences were minimal - New

---

[55] David Whyte, submission to the Government 9 August 1947 EA 159/1/5 pt. 3.

Zealanders remained British subjects, while also having the practical fact of indigenous citizenship legally confirmed. As with the Statute of Westminster, convention and legalism were brought into unison.

Until Canada's initiative in legislating for a distinct national citizenship in 1946, a uniform Commonwealth nationality was provided by the status of British subject - "Civis Britannicus sum". This did not mean a subject of Great Britain, but derived from common allegiance to the Crown. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914 and subsequent parallel Dominion legislation (New Zealand finally adopted all provisions in 1928)[56] gave this legal standing, creating an homogeneous "common code", defining who qualified as British subjects and the conditions for achieving or losing this status. Any desired change to these universal laws of nationality required the consultation and agreement of all member states. However, common status did not necessarily entail uniform rights and privileges as governments maintained their own immigration and electoral laws. For example, in New Zealand, the King's Asian subjects did not enjoy the same rights of entry as Caucasians. In fact, it was only in the United Kingdom that all British subjects enjoyed the same full rights as those born or domiciled there.[57]

In practical terms, the viability of the common code had been long undermined. A single national status

---

[56] British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act. N.Z. Statutes 1928 19 Geo. V. No. 58.

[57] H.J. Harvey, Consultation and Co-operation in the Commonwealth (London, 1952), p.57.

increasingly conflicted with the individual needs of the Dominions and in view of the Statute of Westminster's confirmation of full Dominion sovereignty, was something of an anomaly. This was particularly evident in regard to international relations, where treaties and membership of international organisations necessitated the differentiation of individual nations. The 1937 Imperial Conference had in fact confirmed the right of member states to legally define their own community within the superstructure of British nationality.[58] It was also recognised that in practice all Commonwealth countries distinguished between their own nationals and other British subjects, whether legally defined or not. Thus, distinct subnationalities were present within the supposedly common code and were increasingly apparent by the Second World War. Clearly, while New Zealanders were defined as British subjects, this was according to the law of New Zealand.

But while the common code was increasingly strained, it was not officially breached until the introduction of a specific Canadian citizenship in 1946. Under this formula, local citizenship became the essential determinant of nationality, defined according to its own criteria. The common status of British subject was retained but was relegated to secondary importance, deriving from the primacy of indigenous citizenship as based on allegiance to the King - but in his distinct capacity as sovereign of Canada. The continuity of a common status was thus a

---

[58] Imperial Conference, 1937 - Extract from Section XIV of the Report, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-52 (London, 1953) pp. 930-933. New Zealand opposed this recognition, but Canada and South Africa had defined their own nationals in 1921 and 1927, respectively.

concession to the ideal of a cohesive Commonwealth. Arguably, the new citizenship was a declaratory confirmation of what had emerged through convention. In reality, there was no unitary empire providing a single nationality, but a special association of sovereign nations, and rather than a single crown, the monarch's role was divisible. The principle that "loyalty begins at home" had been long confirmed in custom (especially in Canada and South Africa) if not in law. Nationality, therefore, needed to reflect this rather than pay lip service to an outmoded imperial unity.

Canada's action had obvious implications for the rest of the Commonwealth. If some form of common status was to be retained, it would be necessary to follow the Canadian model. Fraser informed Nash (who was in London for the Prime Ministers' Conference) 20 May 1946, that while he regretted Canada's lack of preliminary consultation, he was not particularly opposed to the prospect of parallel New Zealand citizenship.[59] Though he also emphasised the government's primary desire to retain the status of British subject and expressed the need for a uniform Commonwealth approach on the matter. This stance was reiterated by the New Zealand delegates at the exploratory nationality talks that accompanied the Prime Ministers' Meeting.[60] New Zealand valued British nationality both for reasons of sentiment and practicality. With regard to sentiment, it

---

[59] Fraser to Nash, No. 13, 20 May 1946, 159/2/1 pt.2 - Fraser in fact took a progressive view to nationality as earlier shown by his championing of the rights of women married to aliens.

[60] Prime Ministers' Meeting, May 1946, Minutes of Meeting of Committee of Officials on Nationality Questions EA 53/23/9.

provided a cherished common identity based on loyalty to the monarchy and ethnic origin. As Fraser claimed "we are people of the same race ... merged into the one British".[61] In practical terms, British nationality provided a small nation with a more tangible international identity. If New Zealand was unknown to many in the outside world, the status of British subject was. Independence was thus buttressed and enhanced.

Yet, ironically, despite New Zealand's continued acceptance of the common code, it was also New Zealand who further breached the supposedly uniform system in 1946 by unilaterally legislating in regard to the status of married women. Fraser had consistently opposed the discriminatory law depriving British nationality to women married to aliens, introducing a private members bill to repeal it in 1932. Finally, in 1935 the General Assembly legislated that within New Zealand marriage had no effect on nationality - a significant domestic divergence within the common code.[62] When the new Canadian Citizenship Act removed all such discrimination, it was resolved that the other Commonwealth members (still officially bound to the common code) follow suit.[63] Fraser was eager to invoke immediate legislation and a draft bill was prepared by 22 August 1946. However, the Dominions' Secretary, in an effort to ensure Commonwealth uniformity, requested that New Zealand delay enactment until any technical difficulties were resolved at the proposed

---

[61] NZPD, 7 November 1947, p.533.

[62] British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Amendment Act 10 Geo. VI 1946, No. 20.

[63] P.M.'s Committee of Officials on Nationality Questions, Minutes of Second Meeting, 31 May 1946 EA 153/23/9. Subsequent official statement in New Zealand parliament 1 August 1946.

Nationality Conference of legal experts.[64] Such suggestions were not followed and New Zealand - not normally in the Commonwealth vanguard - subsequently passed the desired legislation 9 October 1946, giving all British subjects personal autonomy regardless of sex. This contravened the supposed commitment to consensus action over changes to nationality laws, further highlighting the impracticability of the common code.

In the wider context, by late 1946 New Zealand officials were advocating new citizenship laws - "administratively such a concept is undoubtedly necessary; culturally, it is desirable; politically, it is in rapid growth".[65] As the forthcoming conference of experts was based on the assumption of developing a new formula for Commonwealth nationality, New Zealand would have no choice but to go along with such proposals. But a commitment to retaining a common status was paramount:

> New Zealand delegates ... should ... put emphasis less on the traits that differentiate the nationalities of the Commonwealth than on the common traits that bind them together ... there is everything to be gained and nothing to be lost by preserving the concept of British nationality ... this is important to a small isolated country as far away from Europe as New Zealand.[66]

Any New Zealand citizenship would thus be placed within a wider Commonwealth framework.

The Nationality and Citizenship Conference eventually met in London February 1947 with legal experts from all the Dominions, Ceylon, Burma, Southern Rhodesia and, significantly,

---

[64] Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Fraser, 12 September 1946, EA 159/2/1 pt. 3.

[65] Memo for Secretary, External Affairs from J.M. Sheenan, 24 December 1946, EA 159/2/1, pt.3.

[66] Memo for Secretary, External Affairs from J.M. Sheenan, ibid.

Eire, in attendance.[67] New Zealand was represented by the Law Draftsman, Dartrey Adams, and Colin Aikman. A new Commonwealth-wide formula was produced, based on the Canadian model. The somewhat inflexible and moribund common code was to be replaced by individual citizenship laws, reflecting local requirements and conditions. The common status of being a British subject was retained, but this derived only from a shared allegiance to the same sovereign who, in practice, was many kings. This new scheme attempted to synthesise two contradictory elements: a distinct national citizenship as espoused by the conscious nationalism of Canada and South Africa; and a cohesive unitary Commonwealth, as supported by New Zealand - "the best of both worlds". The former clearly took precedence, the latter being more a concession to sentiment. As Adams stated in his report to Fraser, the status of British subject would have little meaning if every Commonwealth nation placed most emphasis on their own citizenships.[68]

The very term "British subject" became increasingly contentious in the changing post-war Commonwealth. While New Zealanders regarded themselves as essentially "British", the more nationally conscious Canadians and South Africans did not see this adjective as particularly appropriate, hence their citizenship laws made conspicuously little reference to it. More importantly, following the dramatic

---

[67] Eire had not taken part in any Commonwealth ministerial meetings since 1932. The Eire Citizenship Act 1935 had repudiated common status by denying British nationality to Irish citizens, though they still enjoyed the practical status of British subjects.

[68] H.D.C. Adams, Report on the Conference on Nationality and Citizenship, 27 June 1947, EA 159/2/1, pt.3.

change in the Commonwealth's composition after 1947 - with independent India, Pakistan and Ceylon as free and equal members - the title "British subject" was rendered glaringly inappropriate as was the name "British Commonwealth". In response, the Indian government requested the use of the alternative title "Commonwealth citizen". The United Kingdom government desired to accommodate India and proposed using both British subject and Commonwealth citizen as alternative stylings for the same status, thereby appeasing both the new Asian members and the Old Dominions. It was further suggested that all members use the dual nomenclature in their citizenship laws.[69]

The New Zealand government did not view this compromise favourably, seeing it as further demeaning common status and allegiance to the Crown, though ultimately acceded on the understanding that New Zealand's emphasis would remain on the traditional title.[70] Not all New Zealand officials took a conservative line though, Frank Corner (again showing a radical stance) rationally espoused the reality of the contemporary Commonwealth:

> Commonwealth citizen is an excellent term to express the position of a member of a state in the modern British Commonwealth of Nations ... If we seriously intend to make an attempt to keep India and Pakistan in the Commonwealth we must not oppose change, just because it is change, as the New Zealand government did at the time of the Statute of Westminster ... In any case, the term 'British subject' is inaccurate since we are not subjects of Britain, we are subjects of the King.[71]

---

[69] Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to Minister of External Affairs, 13 April 1948, EA 159/2/1, pt.5.

[70] Minister of External Affairs to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 12 May 1948, EA 159/2/1, pt.5.

The United Kingdom set the example for Commonwealth-wide legislation by passing the British Nationality Act 1948, providing for a specific citizenship of the United Kingdom and colonies. But, unlike the Canadian Act, most emphasis was placed on the common status of British subject; this was a clear model for New Zealand to follow. An interesting feature of the bills' long and controversial passage through the Westminster parliament, was the use of New Zealand by the ardently conservative House of Lords to protest against the changes to nationality. Viscount Simon declared that New Zealanders preferred to remain British subjects and should not be forced to change their status under pressure from an "anti-imperial" socialist government.[72] It was even suggested that New Zealand might sabotage the new formula by refusing to invoke new citizenship laws.

Fraser's government did not fulfil the expectations of the conservative peers, with a subsequent New Zealand bill - directly based on the United Kingdom legislation - introduced 17 August 1948.[73] A distinct New Zealand citizenship was thus created, attained by either birth or naturalisation within New Zealand or one year's residence by a British subject (compared to five years in Canada and Australia). This was a new precedent for New Zealand, for, as Minister of Internal Affairs, William Parry, stated, allegiance to the sovereign was now officially:

---

[71] Frank Corner to Foss Shanahan, 7 May 1948, EA 159/2/1, pt.5.

[72] Hansard, House of Lords, Vol. 156, No. 89, 21 June 1948, p.1009, EA 159/2/1, pt.5.

[73] N.Z. Statutes, 1948, 12 Geo. VI, No. 15.

> by virtue of our citizenship of New Zealand, and we in New Zealand are taking over the sole right of deciding what persons in New Zealand should bear that allegiance. The change in principle is great; the change in practice will be very slight.[74]

Parry emphasised that the government had not forced the issue - "if we had had any option in the matter, we would have retained the common code".[75] But the deciding factor was the resolve for Commonwealth consensus - "we intend to follow New Zealand's traditional policy of supporting the Imperial connection to the utmost".[76] It still seemed that in some areas, things had not changed since Massey's day.

Due to this resilient Commonwealth devotion, the status of British subject - while officially deriving from the primacy of indigenous citizenship - retained precedence. In contrast to the specific "Canadian Citizenship Act", the "British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act" gave evident priority to the former title. Parry was adamant - "that is the order in which we think of them ... we all prefer to be spoken of as British subjects".[77] Thus, New Zealand passports, while carrying the New Zealand Coat of Arms, were stamped "British passport - New Zealand", a symbolic affirmation of the duality of sovereignty and Commonwealth devotion. Despite a lack of enthusiasm, the government also admitted that the new citizenship laws had certain benefits, notably in clearly defining New Zealanders in the international context; this had been unclear under the common code.

---

[74] NZPD, 17 August 1948, Vol. 281, pp.1523-24.

[75] Ibid., p.1520.

[76] Ibid., p.1520.

But, while the new legislation's scope was extensive, the status of some New Zealanders was still vague. An interesting case in kind was that of Sir Carl Berendsen, the New Zealand Minister in Washington. He cabled the government expressing concern that the new laws could deprive him of automatic New Zealand citizenship.[78] While a British subject domiciled in New Zealand for 50 years, Berendsen did not meet any of the qualifications for immediate citizenship under Section 16(1). He was neither born or naturalised in New Zealand (an Australian by birth) and had necessarily been outside the country for the 12 month period preceding the Act's commencement. However, his perceived statelessness was officially rectified by the fact that as a diplomat he was deemed ordinarily resident in New Zealand.[79] Such anomalies inevitably followed the replacement of a uniform system by individual status.

Certain technical complexities regarding New Zealand's Pacific Island dependencies were also raised. The Cook Islands, Niue and the Tokelaus were effectively domestic territory and the inhabitants would automatically qualify as citizens and British subjects. However, by an interesting legal quirk, the Tokelau Islands technically had their administration delegated to New Zealand from Britain, who still enjoyed residual authority.[80] It was therefore necessary to take action to formally include the

---

[77] Ibid., p.1520-21.

[78] Berendsen to Minister of External Affairs, No. 268 25 August 1948, EA 159/2/1, pt.6.

[79] External Affairs Memorandum, 31 August 1948, EA 159/2/1, pt.6.

[80] Emphasised by Crown Solicitor, A.E. Currie to Prime Minister's Department, 16 March 1948, EA 159/2/1, pt.4.

miniscule islands within New Zealand's boundaries. With the adoption of the Statute of Westminster, the General Assembly could enact the necessary legislation, though parallel United Kingdom confirmation by Order in Council was requested.[81] Western Samoa by contrast was a trusteeship territory and its people were not British subjects. Fraser's government desired that all such British protected peoples should enjoy a special common status within the Commonwealth, and was instrumental in achieving recognition of an intermediary non-alien status.[82]

Despite New Zealand's emphasis on the unitary aspects of the new citizenship legislation, in the wider Commonwealth context, differentiation was a more important factor than concessions to common status. A commitment to the primacy of the status of British subject proved to be at variance with the more nationally assertive Commonwealth partners. In fact, the South African Citizenship Act 1949 made no reference to any uniform Commonwealth nationality. Interior Minister Donges realistically claimed that "constitutionally it is no longer possible to talk of a common status".[83] The Commonwealth, he argued, was not a super state and that common allegiance had now ceased to be an essential condition for membership.[84] Given this situation, the Nationalist government concluded "there are ...

---

[81] Union Islands (Revocation) Order in Council 13 September 1948.

[82] W.E. Parry, NZPD, 17 August 1948, Vol. 281, p.1523.

[83] Quoted H.J. Harvey, Consultation and Co-operation in the Commonwealth (Oxford, 1952), p.73.

[84] This latter innovation had been agreed to at the Prime Ministers' Meeting April 1949 but was confined specifically to India with the status of other members unchanged. South Africa was thus acting arbitrarily in refuting common allegiance.

only citizens of Commonwealth countries enjoying preferences within that community of states." While this may have been the case in convention, New Zealand chose to retain a more tangible sense of unity with the Mother Country.

In retrospect, the advent of a specific New Zealand citizenship was an important milestone, but the essential determinant was a commitment to Commonwealth consensus rather than increasing national consciousness. While certain practical and technical advantages were apparent, the government would not have invoked citizenship legislation on its own initiative. When given no alternative but to do so, it was the rationale of maintaining the common status of the British subject that prevailed. New Zealand was a sovereign state, but its people were also content to be British subjects and remained so. British nationality was not regarded as an obstacle to national identity, rather an affirmation of endemic loyalty to the monarchy and the belief in a united Commonwealth. The wider scope of British nationality was also seen to give practical benefits to a small and isolated nation.

III. REMOVAL OF THE TITLE "DOMINION"

A significant corollary of the changes in New Zealand's constitutional and national status was the phasing out of the official title "Dominion of New Zealand".[85] In the myriad of legislation it is significant that New Zealand is listed without any formal prefix.[86] Ironically,

---

[85] Official title proclaimed 26 September 1907.

[86] H.D.C. Adams to A.D. McIntosh, 11 March 1947,

it seemed that by finally achieving official Dominion status, New Zealand ceased to be a Dominion. As with the adoption of the Statute of Westminster and the new citizenship laws, this was essentially a technical matter (despite symbolic importance) and followed unison Commonwealth practice. There was no discernable change to the status quo and little consequent publicity.

The term Dominion (originally "the British Dominions beyond the seas") was somewhat nebulous and its meaning had changed as the Commonwealth evolved. The Balfour Report of 1926 described Dominion status as it had emerged - independent statehood within the Commonwealth. Full sovereign status was in turn achieved by the Statute of Westminster, though the term Dominion continued in usage. However, not all the Dominions were officially styled as such, South Africa was a "Union" and Australia a "Commonwealth". By the post-war period, the term Dominion had become something of an anachronism, implying or at least recollecting an inferior status to Britain.[87] The United Kingdom was not a Dominion and it was seemingly anomalous in an association of free and equal members for one member to be outside the basic nomenclature. It was more appropriate to use universal terms like "member of the Commonwealth". Canada had actually phased out the formal prefix "Dominion of" from its official title in the 1930's. With the independence of the Indian subcontinent, the inappropriateness of the

---

EA 159/1/5, pt.3. Adams advocated using just 'New Zealand' in the Statute of Westminster legislation.

[87] G.A. Wood, 'The Former Dominion of New Zealand', Political Science, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1974 p.5.

title became increasingly apparent. Thus, on 2 July 1947 the British government renamed the Dominions Office the Commonwealth Relations Office, declaring that the old name was "liable to convey a misleading impression of the relations between the United Kingdom and the other members of the Commonwealth."[88]

The New Zealand government certainly felt no inferiority to Britain. The sacrifice of the war confirmed the country's independence and fostered an increased national identity (though by no means as strong as in other Commonwealth countries). While remaining devoted to the Commonwealth, New Zealand did so as a sovereign state and was also involved in wider international affairs. It was therefore seen as increasingly anomalous that New Zealand remained the only officially styled Dominion. The External Affairs Department consequently advised Fraser to drop the title at the end of the war. Significantly, at the Commonwealth Meeting April 1945, both Canada and New Zealand announced their intention to omit the words "Dominion of" when signing the United Nations Charter.[89] It was also agreed that the Commonwealth members would sign as individual nations along with the rest of the international community, in alphabetical order. Thus, at San Francisco on 26 June 1945, Fraser signed the Charter not as part of the British Commonwealth of Nations but for the distinct nation of New Zealand, in between the Netherlands and Nicaragua. In the

---

[88]Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Minister of External Affairs, 1 July 1947, EA 151/1/1, pt.3.

[89]Note of Meeting of Commonwealth Officials 12 April 1945, British Commonwealth Meeting April 1945, Bound Volume National Archives.

post-war world, New Zealand had clearly transcended Dominion status.

Within New Zealand, government departments were instructed 7 January 1946 to omit the official prefix in documents and statements.[90] It was asserted that:

> In view of the developments of the Nations of the Commonwealth it is felt that 'Dominion of' is now an obsolete and confusing description, the retention of which may cause us some embarrassment in the conduct of our interests and affairs.[91]

However, this action was purely administrative and confined to official channels. There was no formal announcement of any change to the country's official title.[92] The government had no intention of creating constitutional controversy and provoking the ardently pro-British opposition. Instead, the prefix Dominion was discreetly removed from official usage and left to wither away , although it remained in certain formal instruments of administration like letters patent.

The government's cautious and informal approach to the whole matter was shown by Fraser's statement to the House, 4 July 1947:

> I noticed something in the press about changing the official title of our country, the Dominion of New Zealand. That matter has not come up as far as New Zealand is concerned ... before anything of that nature is agreed to, the House will have ample opportunity of discussing it. [93]

In view of existing policy, this was a misleading statement and certainly Fraser did not raise the issue in parliament

---

[90,91] Memorandum Prime Minister's Department (by Foss Shanahan) 7 January 1946, EA 25/1/2.

[92] The Dominion of New Zealand was officially pronounced by royal proclamation 9 September 1907.

[93] NZPD, 4 July 1947, Vol. 276, p.233.

again. Even the British government was not officially informed of New Zealand's action. Rather than the norm of consultation, the High Commissioner in Wellington, Sir Patrick Duff, received leaked documents "by devious channels".[94] However, Britain was untroubled by this development:

> One has seen manifestations such as this in Canada and elsewhere and one cannot be surprised at New Zealand following suit.[95]

But in following suit, New Zealand acted quietly, even covertly. Once again, it seemed that the government found it easier to make changes in status than to admit to them.

A further symbolic affirmation of New Zealand's full statehood within the Commonwealth was the removal of the Royal coat of arms from government documents and its replacement by New Zealand heraldry. The Government Printer was directed by the Prime Minister's Department, 4 April 1946, that the New Zealand coat of arms (in use since 1911) be thereafter used on all government stationery and publications.[96] The New Zealand coat of arms with indigenous motifs surmounted by a royal lion and union jack thus provided an apt symbol of New Zealand's perceived position in the post-war Commonwealth.

---

[94] Sir Patrick Duff to Sir Eric Machtig, 13 April 1946, DO 35/1112 C255/1/1.

[95] Ibid.

[96] G.A. Wood, 'The Former Dominion of New Zealand', p.6.

New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND

(1) The British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Amendment Act 1946 retains the royal coat of arms.

(2) By 1948, the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act portrayed the New Zealand coat of arms.

(3) A revised version of the New Zealand coat of arms was issued in 1956 and continues in use today. This gave further emphasis to New Zealand's independence by replacing the royal lion and union jack with St. Edward's Crown, thereby emphasising "the fact that Her Majesty is Queen of New Zealand".

In the period 1945-50, New Zealand's long-established independent status was confirmed and extended. Full legislative sovereignty was obtained and an indigenous citizenship was legalised. While significant domestically, these developments were not meant to be viewed in isolation, but in the context of a united British Commonwealth. Adoption of the Statute of Westminster brought New Zealand into line with other Commonwealth members, as did the removal of the title Dominion . In turn, New Zealand citizenship was invoked in the interests of maintaining a common national status. New Zealand was increasingly aware of its own identity and self-determination, but chose to enjoy this in parallel with an intense commitment to the British Commonwealth. Here was the juncture of independence and interdependence.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSFORMED: NEW ZEALAND'S ATTITUDE TO THE CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POST-WAR COMMONWEALTH

> The British Empire, I am happy to say, is in liquidation ... But we now have the British Commonwealth, a far finer institution of free peoples co-operating together.
>
> - Ormond Wilson NZPD, 15 August 1947, Vol. 277, p.405.

The belated adoption of the Statute of Westminster in 1947 gave New Zealand official parity with the other Dominions, but in the wider Commonwealth context this achievement was an anachronism. New Zealand formally clarified its status within the Commonwealth only to find the Commonwealth itself undergoing a further transformation in the wake of the independence of the Indian subcontinent. The intimate European family of nations that New Zealand was so familiar with, was enlarged by the admission of three new Asian nations - India, Pakistan and Ceylon.[1] These countries proudly asserted their own cultural and political independence, precluding the notion of a "British"

---

[1] India and Pakistan were formally declared independent 15 August 1947 and Ceylon on 4 February 1948.

Commonwealth. As the Labour backbencher, Martyn Finlay, emphasised in 1949:

> I sometimes wonder how much people generally realise the Commonwealth has changed over the last few years. Before the war it consisted of seven self governing Dominions[2]... It was predominantly white, Christian and Occidental in character, culture and background ... Look at the changes that have occurred ... coloured people outnumber the whites about four to one.[3]

While the New Zealand government welcomed the fellowship of the new Asian Dominions, there was also concern about the effect on the Commonwealth's future viability. Could non-European nations fit into the established relationship? New Zealand's scepticism related to the Indian government's avowed policies of republicanism and non-alignment, which were regarded as incompatible with Commonwealth principles. Fraser remained devoted to the ideal of a royalist collective Commonwealth and was reluctant to accept any new constitutional formula reconciling an Indian republic with continued membership. It was feared that such developments would condemn the British Commonwealth to becoming the new "Holy Roman Empire"[4] - an impressive name that had lost formal substance. New Zealand thus played the role of the last bastion of the old Commonwealth, advocating a cohesive association cemented by common allegiance to the Crown. Republican membership

---

[2]Finlay includes the United Kingdom, New Foundland and Eire in this number.

[3]NZPD, 12 July 1949, Vol. 285, p.326.

[4]N. Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth Relations: Problems of Wartime Co-operation and Post-war Change 1939-1952 (London, 1958) p.255.

was ultimately accepted, but only with reluctance, in the interests of Commonwealth consensus.

However, in practical terms, the acceptance of republicanism and non-alignment only made explicit what was implicit in the Commonwealth - a free association of independent states. The assertive independence of Canada and South Africa had long shown that this was not a rigid association of binding commitments. Certainly, the removal of the precondition of allegiance to the Crown (though only initially applying to the special case of India) was a major innovation to the Balfour Declaration, but that in itself did not alter the basis of Commonwealth relations. India remained a Westminster-style democracy, exchanging a governor-general for a non-executive president. The "continuing conference of cabinets" - the essence of inter-Commonwealth relations - thus remained unaltered. As Fraser himself declared in November 1948, New Zealand was "really a republic with the King as our head".[5]

From New Zealand's perspective, the entry of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, did not alter its position in the Commonwealth. The government ensured that its constitutional status was unchanged, while bi-lateral ties with the United Kingdom remained the principal determinant of Commonwealth relations. Contact with Asian members was minimal, largely confined to intermittent conferences. New Zealand therefore consciously maintained a traditional Commonwealth outlook, even at the cost of

---

[5]Fraser speaking in Belfast 23 November 1948, reported The Dominion 24 November 1948.

disregarding developments in the wider context.

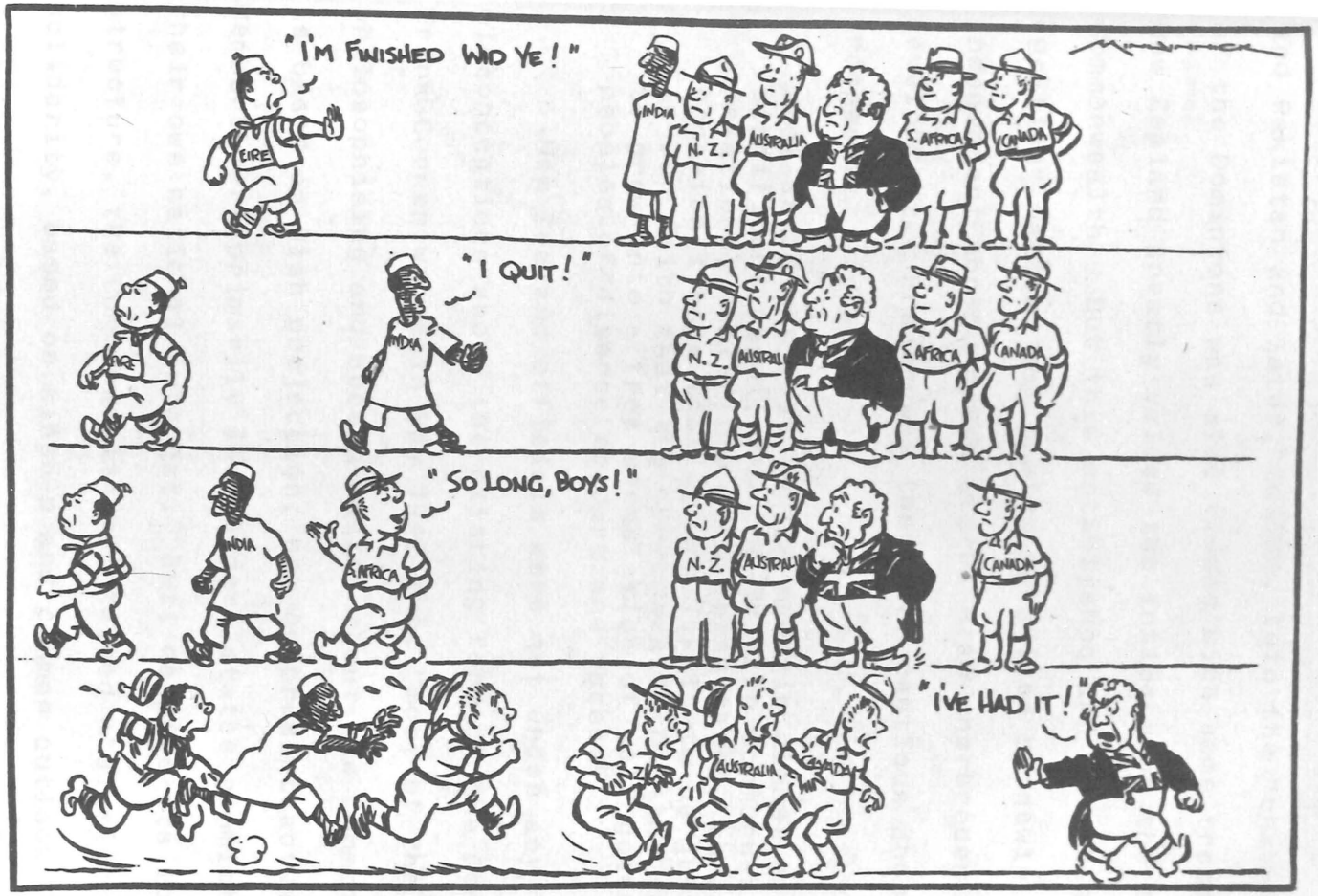
If the post-war Commonwealth was enlarged by Asian membership, the same period also saw Eire officially end its association with the declaration of a republic. This was seemingly ironic, though both cases were distinct. India expressly desired to retain membership and received inter-Commonwealth approval in 1949 before adopting a new constitution. By contrast, Eire's links with the Commonwealth had long been tenuous. The Dublin government had not taken part in ministerial conferences since 1932[6], while an unofficial republican constitution had been in force since 1937. Irish leaders maintained that their country retained only external association with the British Commonwealth, through the use of the King's signature in diplomatic accreditation. Consequently, the Irish government's decision in 1948 to formally declare a republic and leave the Commonwealth resolved a major anomaly. However, the Irish Republic retained a special non-foreign status and New Zealand followed Commonwealth consensus by recognising this. In contrast to the hard-line policy towards India, Wellington showed a greater appreciation of political realities here.

I. THE "NEW COMMONWEALTH" IN ASIA

The New Zealand government viewed with interest the impact of Asian independence on the Commonwealth. Wellington welcomed a final solution to the protracted

---

[6]Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, p.299. However, Irish officials did attend various meetings of Commonwealth officials between 1945 and 1949.



SO YOU WANT TO DROP THE BRITISH?

question of India's self-determination (notwithstanding an awareness of the immense problems of partition) and regarded the granting of independence within the Commonwealth as ideal.[7] However, the entry of India and Pakistan and later, Ceylon, into the "charmed circle" of the Dominions was also viewed with some trepidation. New Zealand greatly valued the intimacy of the existing Commonwealth. But this established and select group of "British" nations was now to be joined by newly independent non-European states - an unprecedented development. Fraser was therefore cautious about future prospects:

> Just as it was felt in the past in almost every significant development of British Commonwealth relations, that risks were being taken, so on this occasion I hope that we are likely to be justified in our faith that the Commonwealth has the capacity to grow into a free association of self governing peoples of diverse colours and races.[8]

New Zealand officials were not under any misconceptions about the existing form of the Commonwealth. Frank Corner wrote in May 1947 that "most of the philosophising and speech-making about the Commonwealth is based on wish projection, not on present actuality".[9] Members were primarily independent states committed to their own national interest. But, despite its loose structure, the Commonwealth maintained a distinctive solidarity, based on kinship and common outlook (French Canadians and Afrikaners notwithstanding). The addition of non-European states seemed to threaten to weaken this

---

[7] Minister of External Affairs to Secretary of State for Dominion Relations, 26 May 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7.

[8] Ibid.

[9] 'Dominion Status and Independence within the Commonwealth', 19 May 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7.

special relationship. Would Asian members have:

> the mental and emotional outlook for sharing this very subtle and emotionally based relationship?... True, the theory has always been that all the races and colours of the whole Empire are joined ... in the project of an association of self-governing peoples ... But it is still only a project.[10]

New Zealand necessarily had little identification with the Asian Commonwealth. While a Pacific country, New Zealand was avowedly "British", strongly linked ethnically, economically and emotionally to the United Kingdom. This special intimacy with the Mother Country was the basic feature of New Zealand's Commonwealth relationship. The importance of Asia was recognised, but only really in thenegative sense of a potential threat, especially after the Japanese advance of 1941. Fear of the "eastern hordes" remained ingrained in the national psyche. In its isolation, New Zealand therefore consciously maintained a distinct British identity. Significant ties with India, Pakistan and Ceylon were not envisaged or desired. The official External Affairs Report for 1948 emphasised that the government had not found it possible to establish the same close consultative relationship with India or Pakistan as was enjoyed with other Commonwealth governments.[11] However, cordial (if not close) relations were desirable and External Affairs advised the government to foster goodwill as a small progressive country known for social reform and a sympathy for colonial ruled peoples (as shown by Fraser's chairmanship of the Trusteeship Committee).

---

[10] Ibid.

[11] Annual Report of Department of External Affairs 1947-48, AJHR, 1948, A-1, p.13.

The government was further advised to avoid supporting the less progressive colonial powers and to prevent any misunderstandings over New Zealand's restrictive non-European immigration policy.[12]

The issue of Asian immigration was, in fact, a major contention regarding the admittance of Asian nations as free and equal members of the Commonwealth. New Zealand and the other "white Dominions" were concerned that the Indian government might use the common status of Commonwealth citizenship to challenge their restrictive immigration policies.[13] In New Zealand, while there was no legislative ban on the entry of Asians, all non-European British subjects required special permits to enter the country. Only in Britain did all British subjects/Commonwealth citizens have equal right of entry. Asian immigration remained a sensitive issue in New Zealand and the government (while not following as hard a line as Canberra's "White Australia Policy") was committed to maintaining the existing system. As Fraser emphasised to the British government 26 May 1947:

> By accepting India as a full member of the Commonwealth, we do not include amongst our obligations that of giving favoured treatment in regard to immigration.[14]

While the New Zealand government was not prepared to treat the citizens of India, Pakistan and Ceylon in the same way as those of the older Dominions, Wellington still hoped that the new members would maintain the Commonwealth relationship. Their secession would

---

[12] External Affairs Paper,'Asian Affairs',1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[13] J.G. Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence (Toronto, 1972), p.241-42.

clearly damage the Commonwealth's strength and prestige. Fraser, therefore, strongly endorsed the merits of Commonwealth membership in a message to India's future leaders on 4 June 1947:

> the people of the British Dominions do not regard dominion status as an imperfect kind of independence. On the contrary, it is independence with something added and not independence with something taken away. It carries with it membership of a free and powerful association ... but one in which a way has been found for the practice of mutual confidence and co-operation in the full respect of the independence, sovereignty and individuality of each member.[15]

This statement aptly described New Zealand's complementary independent foreign policy and Commonwealth commitment. Fraser's enthusiasm, however, overlooked the fact that the Indian Nationalist movement had not struggled for independence to retain the symbolism of the continued sovereignty of the British monarch. Nevertheless, his statement was very well received in London and was given wide publicity. Attlee telegraphed Fraser: "This will be most helpful ... and is exactly what was needed."[16]

The whole matter of Indian independence and the consequences for the Commonwealth was first officially raised in the New Zealand parliament in August 1947, in relation to the Royal Titles Bill. The removal of Emperor of India from the sovereign's titles necessitated

---

[14] Minister of External Affairs to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 26 May 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7.

[15] Statement by Fraser, 4 June 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7.

[16] Attlee to Fraser, 5 June 1947, EA 205/3/4, pt.7. Attlee also referred to Fraser's statement in the reading of the Indian Independence Bill, 10 July 1947. Mansergh, Documents II p.689.

the assent of all dominion parliaments (as prescribed by the Statute of Westminster).[17] Thus, once again, New Zealand legislated in the interests of Commonwealth consensus. In the resulting debate, Fraser re-emphasised the merits of independence within the Commonwealth and expressed the hope that India's association would be lasting. While praising the achievement of independence, Fraser also soberly reflected on the vast problems facing India and Pakistan; both the immediate trauma of partition and long term socio-economic development. Commonwealth membership, he argued, would help overcome these difficulties.[18] Some Labour back benchers were more effusive in their praise of recent developments. For example, Ormond Wilson (Member for Palmerston North) expressed pleasure that the British Empire "is in liquidation ... we now have the British Commonwealth, a far finer institution ... of free peoples co-operating together."[19]

Such comments were to the chagrin of the National opposition. While supporting the government's legislation, National speakers were decidedly less enthusiastic or sympathetic to developments in India. Doidge claimed that the endemic problems of race and religion would worsen under independence, and raised the spectre of immigration by postulating that India might use the Commonwealth to offload her surplus population, "which would swamp

---

[17] Interestingly, New Zealand had not yet adopted the Statute, but was covered by the universal application of the preamble.

[18] NZPD, 15 August 1947, Vol. 277, pp.389-91.

[19] Ibid, p.405.

countries like Australia and New Zealand".[20] In contrast to Fraser's hope that the new Dominions would maintain the Commonwealth link, Doidge quoted from The Statesman (18 July 1947) - "it is absurd to assume ... that either India or Pakistan regard Dominion status as anything more than an ingenious temporary constitutional device".[21] The reality of National's thinking (and probably that of mainstream New Zealand) was shown in the comments of Tom Shand, the Member for Marlborough:

> The situation in India has developed to a state which I think we could only describe as a holocaust ... we view with alarm the effects of the so-called liberties of people who are not ready to receive them.[22]

New Zealand's first formal contact with the new Asian members came at the Canberra Conference on the Japanese Peace Treaty, 26 August - 1 September 1947. As well as being the first major Commonwealth meeting held outside London since Ottawa in 1932, this was the first attended by independent India and Pakistan. Burma, in the throes of independence, was also represented - as a de facto dominion. Fraser was the only visiting premier present and he warmly welcomed the new delegations, paying tribute to Nehru and Jinnah for maintaining the Commonwealth link.[23] New Zealand hoped that early exposure to the frank and informal nature of such

---

[20] NZPD, 15 August 1947, Vol. 277, pp.394-95.

[21] Ibid, p.395.

[22] NZPD, 29 August 1947, Vol. 277, pp.723-24.

[23] Minutes of the first meeting of the Conference on the Japanese Peace Settlement, Canberra, 26 August 1947 EA 102/9/24.

discussions would show the viability of membership. The conference seemed to indicate optimism for the future; the New Zealand report noted the value of the contributions of the Asian representatives and the friendly atmosphere.[24]

But, despite Fraser's endorsement of Dominion status, the Indian government did not regard this as a permanent arrangement. It was rather a "transitional formula",[25] accepted as the means of achieving immediate independence. After grappling with the initial problems of partition and consolidation, the Indian government could turn to the fine details of formulating a definite constitutional status. The Indian Constituent Assembly had already affirmed in December 1946 and January 1947 that this was to be the establishment of a "sovereign democratic republic". Congress had long struggled in the aim of purna swaraj - complete independence; this was clearly not fulfilled by remaining a dominion of the one-time king-emperor. As an ancient civilisation, India's dignity was seen to demand absolute domestic sovereignty. Fraser failed to appreciate this.

However, a republic implied independence outside the Commonwealth. Common allegiance was the essential condition for membership and was enshrined in the Balfour Declaration and Statute of Westminster. Consequently,

---

[24] External Affairs Report, The British Commonwealth Conference, Canberra EA 102/9/3, pt.1.

[25] M. Brecher, 'India's Decision to Remain in the Commonwealth' Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Vol. 12, No. 1 1974, p.62.

Burma seceded from the Commonwealth on achieving independence as a republic in June 1947. As Clement Attlee stated, "we do not desire to retain within the Commonwealth... any unwilling peoples".[26] Logically, an Indian government unwilling to recognise the sovereignty of the Crown (at least in some form) would also have to relinquish membership. There was, of course, the anomaly of Eire - an effective republic retaining Commonwealth association by recognising certain nominal prerogatives of the Crown in external relations - which Nehru had noted in 1946.[27] But Eire was an exceptional case, a nebulous situation which the British government saw best to leave unresolved.

Both New Delhi and London hoped that some way could be found for India to maintain the Commonwealth link, despite the obstacle of a commitment to a republican constitution. India's conciliatory stance related to various factors: goodwill resulting from the transfer of power; awareness that independence within the Commonwealth did not limit India's freedom of action; shared democratic values; a lack of military self-sufficiency; concern at instability in Asia; the fear of isolation; and concern that Pakistan's commitment to the Commonwealth would be to India's detriment should she secede.[28] The British government also had strong political, economic and strategic reasons for keeping India 'in', not the least, the

---

[26] 20 December 1946, quoted Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, pp.244-45.

[27] Addressing the Constituent Assembly 13 December 1946 Nehru stated "even in the British Commonwealth of Nations today Eire is a republic ... so it is a conceivable thing."

[28] Brecher, p.71.

desire to maintain the Commonwealth's (and Britain's) strength and prestige. Thus, as early as May 1947, the Cabinet Committee on Commonwealth relations had been formed under Attlee's chairmanship, to explore ways of allowing countries to retain Commonwealth membership "without excessive uniformity in their internal constitutions".[29] This was an unenviably difficult task as a Commonwealth not centred around the monarchy seemed unthinkable, while the Indian government was adamant that it would only accept full and equal membership; not an Irish style associate status. India was thus the test case for the Commonwealth's future evolution.

The prospect of the issue of future constitutional developments being raised at the 1948 Prime Ministers' conference, prompted the British government to consult with the Old Dominions . Sir Norman Brook, Secretary to the British Cabinet, was subsequently despatched as a special emissary to Wellington, Canberra and Ottawa in August and September 1948. The New Zealand government suggested that the other member nations be included, but Britain affirmed its desire for intimate discussions with established partners.[30] This suggested an already practical division of Commonwealth members into inner and outer circles. In discussions with Fraser (31 August - 1 September), Brook emphasised that India was not prepared

---

[29] J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, King George VI: His Life and Reign (London, 1958), p.721.

[30] Sir Patrick Duff to Fraser, 6 August 1948, EA 59/3/344, pt.1.

to maintain the doctrine of allegiance and that the constituent assembly was already drawing up a republican constitution. The Attlee administration was anxious to accommodate India, but this posed the problem of finding an acceptable new constitutional arrangement.[31]

Brook emphasised that any such arrangement required the maintenance of some tie with the Crown - the essential lowest common denominator of membership. This had both sentimental and practical purposes. As Brook declared, without such a minimum link it would be difficult to justify the special Commonwealth relationship to outsiders. A possible solution was to follow the Irish model with the King retaining a nominal role in diplomatic relations or, alternatively, the Indian president could act as the King's delegated representative. But it was unclear if the Indian government would accept such a compromise and Fraser was not particularly enthusiastic.[32] Here was the contradictory dilemma of wanting to maintain full Commonwealth membership while not weakening the structure. Brook openly admitted that any new formula "would be so feeble and watered down as to be meaningless".[33] Fraser was adamant that he could not support any action affecting the existing Commonwealth relationship; any changes would not be at the expense of New Zealand's cherished ties with the Crown and the Mother Country.

---

[31] Notes on discussion in Prime Minister's office, 31 August 1948, EA 59/3/344, pt.1.

[32] Notes on discussion in Prime Minister's office, 1 September 1948, EA 59/3/344, pt.1.

[33] Ibid, 31 August 1948.

Despite the British government's commitment to a united Commonwealth, Brook also highlighted the existence of a distinct division in membership. On one hand, he presented the close relationship of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand - the Old Dominions. These were nations of primarily British descent who consulted and co-operated with complete confidence. Then there was the "outer circle" comprising the new Asian nations and South Africa, whose newly elected Nationalist government was decidedly cool towards the Commonwealth. In response, Fraser emphasised his opposition to any concept of a "two tiered" Commonwealth;[34] this was seen as unviable and counter-productive. Yet, in practice, an inner and outer circle was already evident as the confidential negotiations showed. Also, by asserting that New Zealand, Australia and Canada would not accept any change in their Commonwealth relationship, Fraser himself showed a distinction amongst members.

The London Prime Ministers' Meeting of October 1948 did, in fact, give the appearance of a united association, although a new epoch in the Commonwealth's development was evident. The leaders of India, Pakistan and Ceylon were now present at the highest level of consultation as co-equals. Pakistani Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, aptly described how the Commonwealth's "complexion had changed", it was now an association of "free nations who believe in the same way of life and in the same democracy. To my mind, these ideas are even stronger than racial

---

[34] Ibid.

ties."[35] Arguably, this also extended to common allegiance. Fraser endorsed the enlarged Commonwealth, hoping it would play a major role in fostering international harmony.[36] New Zealand consciously strove at the conference to create a good impression among the Asian nations (External Affairs briefs had urged the government to make use of the opportunity).[37] Fraser, therefore, paid tribute to "peoples who had for so long been struggling to achieve their independent destiny",[38] and criticised Dutch policy in Indonesia.[39] However, New Zealand's focus remained essentially European and suspicion of Asia continued to permeate. External Affairs had thus advised that: "if India comes forward with Nehru's oft-repeated remark that Australia and New Zealand are part of Asia, you might set the geographers to work."[40]

To ensure a harmonious meeting, it was tacitly agreed to leave the contentious issue of India's future constitutional status off the agenda. Discussions were concentrated on the wider questions of finance, defence and international relations. This would, hopefully, convince the new members of the practical value and benefits of Commonwealth membership. An External Affairs report before the meeting suggested that there should be:

---

[35]Quoted Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, p.250.

[36]PMM (48) Minutes of first meeting, 10 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[37]External Affairs Paper, 'Asian Relations', 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[38]PMM (48) Minutes of 15th meeting, 22 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[39]PMM (48) Minutes of 4th meeting, 12 October 1948, ibid.

[40]Notes on Issues Likely to Arise at 1948 P.M.'s

> a real attempt made to bring the new Dominions within this inner circle by the development of methods of consultation which will give them assurance that they are trusted and accepted as equals. Co-operation will increase as confidence increases.[41]

At the conference, Fraser (clearly speaking to the new Dominions) emphasised the advantages of consultation, allowing members to freely exchange views and air differences "without fear of denunciations".[42]

Certainly, some of India's policies were in sharp contrast to New Zealand's. For example, while denouncing Soviet aggression, Nehru strongly opposed any unitary defence policy based on confrontation with the Soviet Union. Instead, he supported longer term objectives of decreasing international tension and encouraging peaceful relations.[43] This was contrasted by Fraser's cold war advocacy of Commonwealth unity in defence.[44] Widening differences in members' perception of the Commonwealth were thus apparent. While New Zealand regarded this with concern, Fraser was still impressed by the friendly and co-operative attitude of the Asian leaders, which he saw as "quite genuine".[45] From this optimistic start, he hoped it would be possible "to transform the spirit of the meeting into action and ... to find some form of words which will assist the Indians to remain within the Commonwealth."[46]

---

meeting, 27 May 1948 - for A.D. McIntosh, EA 153/26/1, pt.1.

[41] External Affairs Memorandum, 'Constitutional Questions', 12 October 1948, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6.

[42] Notes on Fraser's Opening Speech, P.M.'s Conference, 1948, EA 153/26/1, pt.1.

[43] PMM (48) Minutes of 10th meeting, 19 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[44] PMM (48) Minutes of 11th meeting, 20 October 1948, ibid.

Back in New Zealand, the National opposition viewed certain developments at the Prime Ministers' Meeting with alarm. Sidney Holland strongly protested against the use of the word "Commonwealth" in official communiques rather than the traditional "British Commonwealth".[47] In fact, a secret communique released in London had recommended that, while no formal change was intended, it would be desirable in practice to describe the Commonwealth of Nations without the prefix "British".[48] But such a change in nomenclature was seen to offend the sentiments of a loyal British people. This was a cherished term of identity and Holland categorically refused to drop it. Holland also attacked, by implication, the new Asian membership, expressing concern about "breaking up the Empire and dividing it into small, independent and separate nations".[49] A looser multi-cultural Commonwealth clearly had no appeal to a party standing "true blue for a solid, loyal, united British Empire ... bound by ties of blood, of tradition, of history and language".[50] Fraser, while more sympathetic to recent

---

[45] Fraser to Nash, 23 October 1948, EA 153/26/1, pt.1.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Evening Post, 27 October 1948.

[48] The Commonwealth Relationship - Statement of General Principles', London, 15 October 1948, EA 205/3/4, pt.9.

[49,50] Holland, quoted Evening Post, 27 October 1948.

changes, was equally committed to a "British Commonwealth". He replied from London that New Zealand's position:

> as a British nation of the Commonwealth will be in no way affected, whatever designation may be used to describe the future relationship of the nations which at present form the British Commonwealth.[51]

Despite the Prime Ministers' deliberate avoidance of the question of India's constitutional status (putting off the inevitable), this remained an underlying factor and the subject of much informal discussion. To clarify the situation, immediately after the conference, Nehru, in consultation with Sir Stafford Cripps (a key advocate of India in the Attlee government), issued a ten point memorandum (later reduced to eight points) outlining India's proposals for continued Commonwealth membership.[52] On becoming a republic, Nehru declared, India would continue Commonwealth membership on the basis of the reciprocal common status of Commonwealth citizenship and would not treat Commonwealth countries as foreign states. India was also prepared to acknowledge the King as the honorary "first citizen of the Commonwealth" and "the fountain of honour".

These proposals sparked further inter-Commonwealth discussions. During the United Nations fourth General Assembly in Paris, November 1948, Fraser, Evatt and the new Canadian Secretary of External Affairs, Lester Pearson,

---

[51] Dominion, 29 October 1948.

[52] Pandit Nehru's '10 Points', 28 October 1948 EA 205/3/4, pt.9; Nehru's '8 Points', 11 December 1948 EA 205/3/4, pt.10 - note this made no reference to the King at all and was even less acceptable than the first memorandum.

met with British leaders to discuss the issue (the concurrent problem of Eire was also considered). This was a further example of the "inner circle" at work. Fraser expressed his desire to accommodate India but not at the cost of altering the existing association. Complex constitutional problems were involved and, if insurmountable, Fraser felt it would be better for India to gradually disassociate itself.[53] The British Law Office had reported that Nehru's proposals were insufficient to maintain India's Commonwealth membership. The meeting agreed, there had to be something more concrete than the nominal linkages of common citizenship (this had little practical meaning as the Dominions' restrictive immigration policies, in effect, denied mutual citizenship rights to Asians) and some vague honorific title for the King.[54] Consequently, the leaders informed the Indian government that Nehru's formula was unsatisfactory, urging the retention of some link with the monarchy. The Crown, it was agreed, remained the only possible basis for continued legal membership of the Commonwealth. Further, the Dominion ministers saw it as unlikely that they could convince their parliaments and citizens to accept a Commonwealth not based around the Crown. It was, therefore, suggested that India should at the minimum use the Irish formula of the King appointing diplomatic missions by delegation to the Indian president.[55] The Commonwealth

---

[53]Discussions Between Commonwealth Ministers concerning Ireland and India, 14 November 1948, EA 151/1/1, pt.3.

[54]N.Z. Delegation, Paris to Ministry of External Affairs, 21 November 1948, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6.

[55]N.Z. Delegation, Paris to Ministry of External Affairs, 21 November 1948, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6.

could clearly be flexible, but there had to be face-saving for the Crown to legally justify the relationship.

Despite legal complexities, the Indian government emphasised that this was primarily a political issue needing a practical, realistic resolve.[56] Events vindicated this view. On December 18, in the Jaipur Resolution , Nehru officially secured Congress' approval of an Indian republic's continued Commonwealth membership, in the interests of "the commonweal and the promotion of world peace". It was also emphasised that India would accept no military or political commitments impeding her "freedom of action and independence".[57] This policy clearly was the antithesis of New Zealand's (or, indeed, Britain's) view of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the Attlee government's desire to retain India's membership finally overrode legalism and conservatism.[58] The benefits of India "staying in" were seen to strongly outweigh the disadvantages. Britain's large commercial, communication and strategic interests would clearly be affected if New Delhi's expressed wish to continue the Commonwealth relationship was rebuffed. Just as important was the desire to maintain:

> in the eyes of the world ... the size and power of the Commonwealth ... Confidence in the future of the Commonwealth might be shaken if India followed the path chosen by Burma and Eire. Conversely, the strength and prestige of the Commonwealth would be greatly enhanced if the whole of the Indian sub-continent, after being freed from 'British rule', elected ... to throw in its lot with the Commonwealth.[59]

---

[56] Aide Memoire to British government, 11 December 1948, quoted J.G. Eayrs In Defence of Canada, p.240.

[57] The Jaipur Resolution, 18 December 1948, EA 205/3/4, pt.10.

[58] W.D. McIntyre, 'Peter Fraser's Commonwealth',

Appreciation of these factors was decisive in the British cabinet's agreement 3 March 1949, that a republican India, owing no allegiance to the Crown, should be accommodated within the Commonwealth's structure.[60]

London now had to gain the consensus of the rest of the Commonwealth in this matter. Even before cabinet's formal approval, Attlee had informed Fraser that the existing basis of the Commonwealth would likely have to be modified to accommodate India.[61] As this was an issue of fundamental concern to all Commonwealth members, Attlee considered a special Prime Ministers' Meeting, to reach a uniform agreement as essential. Obviously, it was inconvenient to convene a further meeting so soon after the previous one (where the problem had been put aside), but the imminent adoption of a new Indian constitution and a greater understanding of the issues involved necessitated a solution to the unresolved problem. Once again, British emissaries were despatched for preliminary consultation with Commonwealth governments. Lord Listowel, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, was sent to Australia and New Zealand - the two most

---

New Zealand in World Affairs, Vol. 1 (Wellington, 1977) - emphasises the division between the hard line of the Law and Foreign Offices and the conciliatory policy of the Commonwealth Relations and Colonial Offices.

[59] Commonwealth Relations Office Paper, 'India's Future Relations with the Commonwealth', 28 February 1949, EA 205/3/4, pt.10.

[60] Wheeler-Bennett, p.724.

[61] Attlee to Fraser, 28 February 1949, EA 153/27/1, pt.1.

conservative Commonwealth countries. London did not want the delicate issue of the Crown's position to become the subject of public controversy and requested Listowel's visit receive no publicity.[62] Inevitably, press speculation was aroused, though many reports wrongly interpreted the strict secrecy as reflecting military discussions on Communist penetration in Asia.[63]

Fraser and the External Affairs Department, in their discussions with Listowel, took a hard line against reconciling an Indian republic - that was not prepared to give the Crown even a nominal role in external relations - with continued Commonwealth membership. This intransigence derived from two factors. Firstly, there was New Zealand's entrenched loyalty to the monarchy. Fraser emphasised that any change to the King's role in the wider Commonwealth was "a big revolution for our people and particularly the people of New Zealand, whose devotion to the Crown was traditional and real".[64] Any new formula to replace the Balfour Declaration, it was argued, would only denigrate the monarchy, encourage more republics and make the Commonwealth a less than tangible association - "cheapening the link and weakening the bond".[65] McIntosh went as far as concluding that the existing monarchic Commonwealth

---

[62] H. Smedley to A.R. McIntosh, 8 March 1949, EA 59/3/381, pt.1.

[63] Dominion, 16 March 1949.

[64] Second meeting between Fraser and Listowel, 22 March 1949, EA 205/3/4, pt.10.

[65] First meeting between Fraser and Listowel, 21 March 1949, Ibid.

derived from a distinct European outlook of common traditions and institutions and that the new Asian members seemed incompatible with this structure.[66] In any case, New Zealand was adamant that its loyalty to the sovereign would not change.

Secondly (and more importantly) Fraser was concerned that Nehru seemed to be espousing a policy of non-alignment, rather than the traditional commitment to Commonwealth collective security . Fraser directly asked Listowel:

> What is India's contribution to the Commonwealth to be? ... What are the other countries of the Commonwealth to get in return if they alter the Commonwealth as an association to admit India as a republic?[67]

It was all very well, Fraser exclaimed, for Nehru to talk in the Jaipur Resolution of promoting world peace through Commonwealth membership, but it appeared this co-operation did not extend to war. Such a stance was regarded as wholly incompatible with the security needs of the post-war era. To Fraser, India was retaining the benefits of membership without providing a tangible contribution. Surely, a minimum defence commitment was required, otherwise the prospect was a "flabby Commonwealth" reduced to"nebulous goodwill and endless conferences".[68] McIntosh suggested it would be more satisfactory to exclude India while retaining some form of treaty relationship:

---

[66]Meeting in McIntosh's office, 22 March 1949, EA 59/3/381, pt. 1.

[67]Second meeting between Fraser and Listowel,op.cit.

[68]Ibid.

"only then would there be any assurance of unity and confidence in Commonwealth policy".[69]

However, this perception of the Commonwealth was unduly narrow and ignored practical reality. The Commonwealth had evolved as a free association of consultation and co-operation, rather than a military alliance of distinct obligations. Canada's action as early as 1922 in the Chanak crisis and the South African parliament's narrow majority in declaring war in 1939 had long confirmed this. Nehru's policy, while more explicit and strident, only followed what was previously implicit. It seemed that the New Zealand government's dedication to the Mother Country and mounting cold war tension roused Fraser into giving the Commonwealth qualities it did not, in fact, possess. New Zealand's commitment to 'imperial defence was not synonomous with the reality of the wider Commonwealth.

While appreciating the United Kingdom's special interests in conciliating India, the New Zealand government was concerned that the Commonwealth it knew would be irrevocably altered, both in its emotional and practical importance. External Affairs reports in preparation for the Prime Ministers' Meeting reiterated an adamant stance: New Zealand's relations with the Crown would not change; the government stood by the earlier invitation that India retain Dominion status; and that the various ingenious devices to provide a link between the Crown and India were

---

[69]Meeting in McIntosh's office, 22 March 1949, EA 59/3/381, pt.1.

unacceptable.[70] New Zealand's instincts were to say "the Commonwealth has meant this and you mean something quite different." Certainly, a"Kingless Commonwealth" with less substance than the Western Union or Atlantic Pact would not "stir any responsive chord in the average New Zealander's breast".[71] However, it was recognised that Britain was determined to keep India in the Commonwealth:

> Any other result will appear to her as a serious diminution of her own position as a great power ... the Indian connection represents for her an immense moral capital, the compensation payment for empire.[72]

If the wider Commonwealth association was to become looser, New Zealand was determined to maintain bi-lateral ties with established Commonwealth partners. This was seen to involve the "strengthening and even formalisation of ties with, at any rate, Britain and Australia".[73] There was concern that by conciliating the Asian members, Britain was neglecting the "special community of interest between the 'British Dominions' which is implicit in New Zealand thought concerning the Commonwealth".[74] Thus, despite Fraser's past criticism of a "two tier Commonwealth", New Zealand was already operating in the "inner circle" and wanted to strengthen it in the face of an enlarged multi-cultural association. Essentially, New Zealand was doing nothing new; a special relationship with Britain was the essence of its Commonwealth relationship. Despite calls for greater contacts between the Dominions,[75] New Zealand had never had particularly close ties with Canada or South Africa and even less cause

---

[70] 'India and the Commonwealth', 4 April 1949, EA 205/3/4, pt.10.

for significant contacts with India or Pakistan. Even the close co-operation with Australia had really only developed during the war. New Zealand could, therefore, de-emphasise the new developments and stress its own maintenance of the status quo. The Commonwealth might change but New Zealand did not have to follow suit.

Before the 1949 meeting, the British and Indian governments had already tacitly agreed on India's continued membership, and an understanding had been reached that India would be prepared to recognise the King as the Head of the Commonwealth, thereby providing a nominal link.[76] With this ground work between the two main parties done, the technical detail of formalising India's new relationship with the Commonwealth - in effect redefining the association - was left to the official meeting. Fraser viewed the event with the greatest importance:

> The future of the British Commonwealth and Empire will, in a large measure, be determined during one momentous week ... Every effort will be made to retain India without any weakening of the ties which bind the Commonwealth nations.[77]

The National opposition voiced concern about the meeting's intention. Doidge, once again playing the role of arch-imperialist, was particularly strident: "The great and

---

[71,72] Ibid.

[73,74] 'India and the Commonwealth', 4 April 1949, EA 205/3/4, pt.10.

[75] Commonwealth Relations Office Memorandum, The Commonwealth Relationship, 28 February 1949, EA 151/1/1, pt.3.

[76] The Under Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, Patrick Gordon Walker, was sent as Attlee's emissary to New Delhi, the same time as Lord Listowel was in Australasia and secured this understanding.

glorious British Empire took centuries to build. A small group of men, three of them socialists ... are going to determine the future of the Empire".[78] Doidge warned against accepting republican membership: "it would never be tolerated by the people of this Dominion, with us ... loyalty to the Crown is almost a religion".[79]

Fraser went to the Prime Ministers' Meeting prepared to accept Commonwealth consensus, but was equally committed to maintaining New Zealand's established relationship. Reconciling Indian republicanism was a technical matter but centred on the sensitive area of the role of the monarchy. Fraser maintained grave doubts about removing the precondition of common allegiance and emphasised that constitutional changes to accommodate India would have no effect on New Zealand's monarchical status.[80] He proudly declared to the meeting that his country was built as "an extension of the homeland" and that loyalty to the Crown had only intensified through national independence.[81] However, New Zealand's emphasis on the monarchy as the Commonwealth's linchpin was not supported by other members. The new Nationalist Prime Minister of South Africa, Daniel Malan (whose party was committed to establishing a republic) maintained that the relaxation of common allegiance was a natural

---

[77] Fraser's Press Statement, 13 April 1949, EA 153/27/1, pt.1.

[78,79] Dominion, 20 April 1949.

[80] PMM (49) Minutes of second meeting, 25 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

[81] PMM (49) Minutes of first meeting, 22 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

consequence of growing national consciousness. In British/Afrikaner divided South Africa, he argued, the Crown was not necessarily a unifying force.[82] New Zealand's perception of the Commonwealth was clearly being increasingly challenged.

The drafting of a declaration acceptable to all members was a difficult task.[83] The differing perceptions of the Commonwealth by the various states ensured disagreement over wording and terminology. Compromise was, therefore, necessary, as Fraser admitted "we all have to yield something to get an agreed declaration".[84] In New Zealand's case this involved accepting a looser association of states no longer united by common allegiance (though confined to the special case of India). The finally agreed formula, the so-called London Declaration, officially presented on 27 April, comprised of four operative paragraphs. The first stated the existing Commonwealth relationship; the second conveyed India's decision to adopt a republican constitution while retaining full membership; the third expressed the other members' recognition of India's action and their maintenance of the status quo; and the fourth stated the members' continued unity of purpose.[85] Initially, Attlee had proposed two declarations, one for India and another for the rest. But by the second meeting it was

---

[82] Ibid.

[83] Fraser emphasised this in a telegram to Nash 25 April 1949, EA 153/27/3.

[84] Fraser to Nash, 26 April 1949, EA 153/27/3.

[85] Approved Text of Final Communique, PMM (49) 26 April 1949, EA 153/27/1, pt.1.

resolved to formulate a single declaration, giving greater emphasis to Commonwealth solidarity.

The London Declaration was able to reconcile a republican India with an otherwise monarchic Commonwealth by India's acceptance of the Crown as the Head of the Commonwealth and "the symbol of the free association" of member states. This titular role was, in fact, mentioned in the Statute of Westminster.[86] While not prepared to maintain the Crown's nominal sovereignty in internal or external affairs, India could accept the King's position as patron of the Commonwealth.[87] This was an ambiguous title placating both royalist and republican sentiment. South African Prime Minister Malan protested its possible implication of a "super state", rather than the established divisibility of the Crown.[88] This impasse was resolved by the complex wording of the final declaration, expressing India's:

> acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of its (i.e. the Commonwealth's) independent member nations and <u>as such</u> the Head of the Commonwealth.

This emphasised that the title was a derivative honour and not a constitutional position, and was confirmed by a confidential minute.[89] India's linkage was looser than New Zealand and other Commonwealth governments had been

---

[86] 22 Geo. V, c.4.

[87] PMM (49) Minutes of second meeting, 25 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

[88] Ibid.

[89] "... the designation of the King as Head of the Commonwealth does not connote any change in the constitutional relations existing between members and, in particular, does not imply that the King discharges any constitutional function by virtue of that Headship", EA 153/27/5.

previously prepared to accept. But it was a satisfactory compromise, maintaining the appearance of a cohesive Commonwealth linked by the Crown.

Significantly, the declaration made no reference to the common status of Commonwealth citizenship (which Nehru had previously advocated as an acceptable link). Other members (including New Zealand) had vetoed the exchange of mutual citizenship rights with non-European India as an unsuitable formula. Instead, a further confidential minute attached to the London Declaration, reiterated that member nations did not regard themselves as foreign in relation to each other and that existing preferential treatment for citizens and trade would continue, although each government was free to determine the extent of such preferences.[90]

The acceptance of a republic within the Commonwealth was specifically confined to India, with the common allegiance of the other members unaltered. However, despite attempts to argue otherwise, this was a decisive innovation - common allegiance was no longer the essential test for membership. Here was a substantial advance from the anomalous situation with Eire. India's example obviously set a precedent for similar action by other nations. Pakistani Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, thus raised the issue that in the future other members could desire to adopt republican constitutions (as Pakistan did in 1955). Would they, he asked, be able to retain

---

[90] Confidential Interpretative Minutes, 26 April 1949, EA 153/27/5

Commonwealth membership?[91] The meeting was reluctant to admit this, but it was logically assumed that other nations would be given similar treatment as India.[92] This understanding was incorporated into a further confidential minute - these appendages, in fact, told more about the meeting than the bland official declaration. Fraser certainly hoped that the future would not see a multiplicity of republican members. But subsequent decolonisation in the 1950's and 1960's ensured that India could not remain the special exception.

While Fraser was forced to accept a Commonwealth no longer uniformly linked by common allegiance, he remained committed to a "basic unity of outlook and underlying inclination to help each other in all possible ways and circumstances".[93] In the past, the inherent viability of the Commonwealth had been shown by the mutual willingness to co-operate militarily. In the existing unstable international climate, Fraser saw this understanding as crucial. He therefore expressly asked his fellow prime ministers if the Commonwealth would in the future still "stand together in an emergency in support of a just cause?"[94] This was the litmus test for a practical and effective association. Interestingly, Fraser was supported here by Pakistan (a strategically vulnerable nation) in calling for an assurance of mutual assistance.[95] By contrast, Nehru was adamant that the

---

[91] PMM (49) Minutes of 3rd meeting,25 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

[92] PMM (49) Minutes of 4th meeting,26 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

[93] PMM (49) Minutes of 3rd meeting,25 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

Commonwealth (as defined by the Statute of Westminster) was a free association of sovereign states requiring no specific commitments. Rather than negative defence co-operation, the Indian government was only prepared to engage in peaceful and constructive activities. Nehru criticised the notion of a Commonwealth defence bloc, advocating instead policies for defueling international tensions and fostering peace. He pointed to the situation in Asia, where the spread of Communism was largely a consequence of poverty and under-development and would not be countered by armed force.[96]

Consequently, Nehru insisted on altering the declaration's statement on Commonwealth objectives. Rather than affirm a commitment to "peace, security and progress", Nehru succeeded in replacing the military connotations of "security" with "liberty".[97] Nehru's perception of the Commonwealth as a looser association was clearly the antithesis of Fraser's organic brotherhood. However, the former view was the way of the future. As Nehru emphasised when submitting the London Declaration to the Constituent Assembly for ratification, 16 May 1949:

> Apart from certain friendly approaches to one another ... there is hardly any obligation in the nature of commitments.[98]

While Nehru arguably only made explicit what was evident in the Commonwealth relationship, New Zealand was not

---

[94] PMM (49) Minutes of 6th meeting, 27 April 1949, ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Approved text of final communique PMM (49) 26 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

[98] Mansergh, Documents II, p.848.

pleased to see its view of the Commonwealth rebuked in the wider context. Fraser and Nehru thus represented the two poles of the post-war Commonwealth - the loyal British Dominion and the emergent Asian power - although their apparent mutual admiration helped smooth over their sharp policy differences.[99]

Fraser's official statement at the conclusion of the conference remained consistent with New Zealand's conservative line: "we would have preferred to continue to accept the ties and form of association existing at present". Nevertheless, Fraser recognised the practical reality that the Commonwealth:

> is not and never has been a rigid structure based on statutes and treaties. It is, in fact, a free association based on common interests, common understandings and subject to growth and change ... Just as the Statute of Westminster in 1931 registered changes that have occurred, so it would be true to say does the declaration of 1949 describe the status of the Commonwealth at the present time.[100]

New Zealand could take comfort that its own allegiance to the Crown was unchanged and that the declaration represented the maximum agreement possible.

The 1949 settlement has been described as "almost metaphysical in its refinement",[101] evidence of the Commonwealth's remarkable ability for evolution and compromise. A later comment in the New Zealand parliament described the settlement as:

---

[99] McIntyre, 'Peter Fraser's Commonwealth', pp.87-88. Martyn Finlay also described "the strong bond of sympathy that exists between him (Fraser) and Mr Nehru". NZPD, 12 July 1949, Vol. 285, p.326. Allegations of a close personal friendship would, however, appear to be exaggerated.

[100] Fraser's Press statement forwarded to Ministry of External Affairs 27 April for release 28 April 1949, EA 151/1/1, pt.3.

[101] Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, p.252.

> almost Gilbert and Sullivan in character. Although the communique and statement do seem to be illogical, they enable a way to be found out of a difficult situation.[102]

Illogical means were meant to achieve practical ends - retaining India's membership. Certainly, acceptance of republican membership was a realistic move for an association where equality and self-determination (tempered by consultation and co-operation) were the practical features. The Commonwealth proved it could successfully adapt from a narrow European base and that multi-cultural membership was not a short term expedient. The cost, however, was a weakening of the symbolic and practical links that New Zealand held dear - and adamantly maintained on its own terms.[103]

The enlarged Commonwealth inevitably complicated relationships. The New Zealand government was particularly embarrassed when inter-Commonwealth disputes between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and between India and South Africa over racial discrimination, were taken outside the 'family circle' to the United Nations.[104] New Zealand recognised the importance of India's leadership in Asia and sent observers to the Pan Asian Conference on Indonesia in New Delhi, January 1949. External Affairs was further prompted in late 1949 to consider the desirability of establishing a diplomatic post in New Delhi.

---

[102] D.M. Rae (Member for Parnell) NZPD, 17 August 1950, Vol. 290, p.1594.

[103] The Republic of India was officially declared 26 January 1950, after the defeat of the Labour government. The New Zealand Republic of India Act was subsequently passed 4 September 1950, ensuring that India's new status did not differentiate it from the rest of the Commonwealth in regard to New Zealand law.

It was hoped that full Commonwealth representation there would influence Indian policy, while New Zealand could ensure that its immigration policy was not misrepresented.[105] By the end of 1949 Wellington was also providing some limited financial and technical aid to the Asian Commonwealth, particularly to Ceylon. As another small island nation, Ceylon was seen as an appropriate focus for New Zealand's co-operation with the New Commonwealth.[106] While such contacts were minimal, they foreshadowed the development of the Colombo Plan in 1950 and showed New Zealand accepting the enlarged Commonwealth relationship.

II. EIRE AND THE DECLARATION OF A REPUBLIC

It was seemingly ironic that the promulgation of the London Declaration on 27 April 1949 - thereby reconciling republican India with Commonwealth membership - should be preceded on 18 April by the official proclaimation of the Republic of Ireland and that country's formal exit from the Commonwealth. Even more so, as the basic formula of India's recognition of the King as symbolic Head of the Commonwealth had, in fact, been suggested by Eamon de Valera to Lloyd George for the Irish Free State in 1921.[107] What had not been possible in the more rigid

---

[104] Annual Report of Department of External Affairs 1947-48, AJHR, 1948, A-1, Vol. 1, p.12.

[105] External Affairs memorandum, 'Establishment of a New Zealand Diplomatic Post in Asia',23 December 1949, EA 153/28/5, pt.1.

[106] Annual Report of Department of External Affairs 1949-50, AJHR,1950, A-1, Vol. 1, p.23.

[107] Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth

British Commonwealth of 1921 was now acceptable in the free association of independent nations of 1949. But while parallels can be drawn between the concurrent issues of Indian and Irish republicanism, they were also quite distinct. Resolving India's status within the Commonwealth was a reasonably orderly post-war process, strongly contrasted by the protracted problem of Ireland. By 1945 Eire's formal links with the Commonwealth were very tenuous; the full membership sought by India had already been forfeited. Consequently, the official declaration of a republic and secession from the Commonwealth - while retaining a non-foreign status - was the best solution possible. The New Zealand government was sympathetic to the complexity of Eire's position and supported an effective resolution. Wellington showed a greater sense of political realism here, compared to the hardline attitude to the more sensitive issue of Indian republicanism.

Eire's status in the Commonwealth was a peculiar anomaly. The 1937 constitution created an undeclared republic with a non-executive president as head of state.[108] However, under the Executive Authority (External Relations) Act 1936, the Crown retained a nominal role in external affairs by the use of the King's signature in diplomatic accreditation. This vestige of royal authority allowed the British government to maintain that there was "no fundamental alteration in the position of the Irish

---

Relations, p.294.

[108] de Valera later claimed an official republic was not declared as this august title was inappropriate while the nation was partitioned - 24 November 1948 in Mansergh, Documents II, p.808.

Free State".[109] Eire's status was deliberately left unresolved in the hope of avoiding constitutional controversy, evidence that flexible pragmatism could over-ride legalism when necessary. But the actions of the Irish government emphasised that they were not a full member of the Commonwealth; Eire was not represented at Commonwealth ministerial conferences after 1932 and remained strictly neutral in the Second World War. The Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Eamon de Valera, emphasised in 1947 that Eire was an independent republic only externally associated with the Commonwealth:

> This is a republican state. As a matter of our external policy, we are associated with the states of the British Commonwealth. We are not at the present time regarded as members of it, but we are regarded as associates.[110]

This nebulous relationship was maintained until the new premier, John Costello, announced (somewhat unexpectedly) at a press conference in Ottawa 7 September 1948, the intention of repealing the External Relations Act. This, he said, would clarify Eire's republican status and remove the unsatisfactory situation of the British monarch retaining certain functions in the conduct of external relations. For example, it was with much embarrassment that Dublin's Ambassador to the Holy See was accredited through the office of the King of England.[110A] This action committed the Irish government to end all formal ties with the Commonwealth, as explicit republicanism was still

---

[109] Quoted Mansergh, 'The Implications of Eire's Relationship with the British Commonwealth of Nations', International Affairs 1948, p.7.

[110] 24 June 1947, Mansergh Documents II, p.797.

[110A] Mansergh, Survey of British Commonwealth Relations, p.269.

incompatible with continued membership.

Despite the special ties with Britain, the New Zealand government also maintained friendly relations with Eire. While Fraser regretted Irish neutrality in the war,[111] he respected the right to do so, receiving the thanks of the New Zealand-Eire Association.[112] Fraser's conciliatory attitude was further shown by the hospitality extended to de Valera (now the Leader of the Opposition) during his visit to New Zealand in May 1948 - part of his extensive overseas tour to espouse the cause of Irish unity. At a public meeting at the Wellington Town Hall, Fraser paid tribute to the nation's honoured guest and commented on the long struggle for Irish independence. However, the Prime Minister probably felt less than comfortable when the meeting's lacklustre rendition of "God Save the King" was contrasted by a rousing version of "The Soldier's Song".[113] While fully aware of the importance of Irish nationalism, Fraser expressed the hope that Dublin would maintain its friendly association with the Commonwealth.[114]

The Costello government was not, however, prepared to continue this obscure connection. The 1948 Prime Ministers' Conference thus provided the opportunity for the leaders of New Zealand, Australia and Canada

---

[111] In a telegram to the High Commissioner in London 25 September 1945, Fraser stated "it is difficult to forget that Eire's neutrality was prejudicial to the Allied cause", EA 58/207/1, pt. 1A.

[112] Letter to Fraser from Secretary of Eire National Association, 30 August 1945, EA 58/207/1, pt. 1A.

[113] The Evening Post, 26 May 1948.

[114] The Dominion, 27 May 1948.

(the three Dominions with substantial populations of Irish descent) to discuss the consequences of the repeal of the External Relations Act with British and Irish ministers. Meetings were held at Chequers on 18 October and later in Paris, 16-17 November. British policy was initially hard line; by repealing the External Relations Act, Eire was cutting its last formal links with the Commonwealth and would become a foreign country. Consequently, it would be difficult to justify maintaining Eire's special preferences in trade and citizenship, as other foreign countries enjoying "most favoured nation" status could demand similar rights.[115] Given this difficult situation, the conciliatory influence of the Dominion leaders was crucial. Fraser, Evatt and St. Laurent refused to be associated with the uncompromising legalism of the British cabinet's message to the Irish government on 11 November, suggesting instead that some compromise was needed.[116] As the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Jowitt, later stated:

> If we had taken a different line from the one we decided to take, we should have acted in the teeth of the advice of the representatives of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[117]

At the Paris discussions, the Irish Minister of External Affairs, Sean McBride, argued that Eire had, in fact, been outside the Commonwealth since 1937, but that

---

[115] Fraser to Nash, 18 October 1948, EA 58/207/1, pt.1A.

[116] Fraser to W.J. Jordan, 15 November 1948, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6.

[117] House of Lords Debate, 15 December 1948, Mansergh, Documents II, p.819.

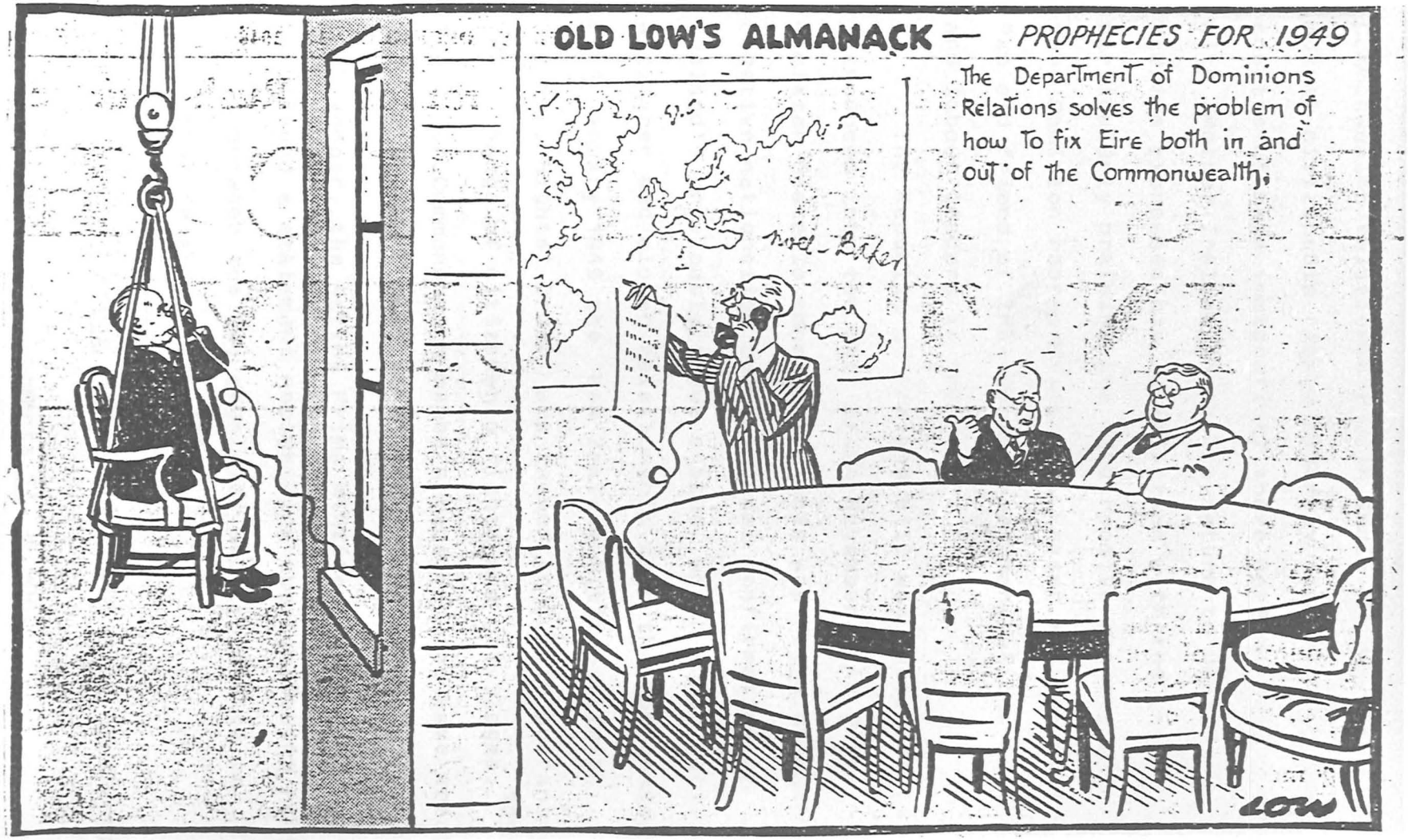
special rights in citizenship and trade had been retained - Irish goods were not treated as foreign and Irish nationals were not deemed aliens. Why, then, should this established arrangement end, when the Irish government were simply clarifying the existing situation by repealing the External Relations Act? Eire, McBride concluded, could not be in the Commonwealth but the special relationship should be recognised and maintained.[118] Extensive Anglo-Irish trade and the large numbers of Irish citizens working in Britain ensured that a foreign Eire would create great difficulties. The problem was, therefore, to find a suitable link to legally justify Eire's continued special status with the Commonwealth.

The exchange of citizenship rights was eventually singled out as the suitable focus for linkage. Fraser pointed out that the new Commonwealth nationality laws gave Irish citizens the status of British subjects/Commonwealth citizens.[119] Under Irish law there was no official reciprocal treatment for Commonwealth nationals, although an Order in Council under the Aliens Act ensured that British subjects were not treated as aliens. It was, therefore, agreed that if the Irish government provided the citizens of Commonwealth countries with the same legal status as given to Irish nationals in the Commonwealth, the Republic would maintain a non-foreign status.[120] As with India, this was not the most tidy or logical arrangement but it was practical. It was also apparent that, while the

---

[118] Discussions between Commonwealth and Irish Ministers, Paris, 16 November 1948, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6.

[119,120] Ibid.


OLD LOW'S ALMANACK — PROPHECIES FOR 1949
The Department of Dominions Relations solves the problem of how To fix Eire both in and out of the Commonwealth.
LOW

"White Dominions" were not prepared to forge a new Commonwealth relationship with India on the basis of mutual citizenship rights (thereby facilitating the spectre of mass immigration) there were no such qualms with Mother Ireland . On his return to Dublin, McBride expressed his satisfaction with the talks, particularly praising the constructive contribution from the Dominion representatives. Fraser was lauded as "an old friend of Ireland who knew many of our national and labour leaders in the past".[121]

The Republic of Ireland Bill was subsequently introduced into the Dail on 24 November. As Prime Minister Costello emphasised, this was not a product of negative nationalism but the legal confirmation of Ireland's previously vague status, which would facilitate a clearer and closer relationship with the Commonwealth.[122] On 1 January 1949 the New Zealand Citizens (Irish Citizens Rights) Order was issued in Dublin guaranteeing the exchange of citizenship rights and privileges.[123] The other Commonwealth members received the same treatment, thus confirming the new relationship. Earlier, on 27 November, the Acting Prime Minister, Walter Nash, had issued a statement recognising the continuing non-foreign status between the two countries and the desire to strengthen friendly ties.[124]

---

[121] Irish Press, 20 November 1948, Press Clipping, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6

[122] Mansergh, Documents II, p.806.

[123] Minister of External Affairs, Dublin to Minister of External Affairs, Wellington, 31 December 1948 , EA 207/4/2/1, pt.7.

[124] Statement by Nash,27 November 1948,EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6.

The most significant illustration of New Zealand's amity with Ireland was Fraser's official visit in late December 1948 (while the passage of the Republican Bill was still in progress). On his arrival in Dublin, when asked what effect the new legislation would have on bi-lateral relations, Fraser adamantly replied: "What difference could there be? There has been friendliness always."[125] Fraser's visit was given a high profile, including the conferment of an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the National University of Ireland and a radio broadcast on New Zealand's social services. On the Prime Minister's departure, McBride informed Wellington of the strong impression Fraser had made during his stay.[126] Diplomatic niceties aside, the visit had clearly shown New Zealand's approval of the new Ireland-Commonwealth relationship.

Fraser's statesmanship was tested when he went on to briefly visit Northern Ireland. While his personal sympathies appeared to lie south of the border,[127] he tactfully made no reference to the problems of partition and declared the new arrangement with the Republic "sensible and beneficial".[128] However, Fraser maintained an ardent belief in the Commonwealth, declaring in Belfast:

> I stand for the British Commonwealth and I would like to welcome back into the Commonwealth in some form or association the whole of Ireland.[129]

---

[125] Dominion, 22 December 1948.

[126] Minister of External Affairs, Dublin to Minister of External Affairs, Wellington, 23 December 1948, EA 58/207/1, pt. 1A.

[127] In Paris Fraser stated that he "had never found the people of Northern Ireland particularly amenable", EA 207/4/2/1, pt.6. Later, in August 1950 when Opposition Leader, he spoke of the "centuries of wrong and injustice" and the "tragedy and oppression" endured by Ireland, NZPD,

This was a contentious statement, indicating that despite his sympathy with Dublin, a commitment to a united Commonwealth remained pre-eminent. Certainly, Fraser could not accept a rejection of the monarchy in New Zealand's context:

> We cannot see any fundamental difference between our British Commonwealth and any republic. We are really a republic with the King as our head. The King is the link and a very good link, I would say.[130]

Fraser would not have made this statement in Dublin, where a link with the Crown (however, nebulous) was unacceptable.

The official declaration of the Irish Republic on Easter Day 1949, was seen to require Commonwealth-wide legislation, ensuring that while Ireland was no longer one of His Majesty's Dominions , existing laws would still recognise its non-foreign status.[131] The opposition was less willing to legislate passively in this area. Holland strongly informed the government on 21 January 1949 that any:

> public action, resolution or statement to recognise Southern Ireland's abandonment of her British associations should be accompanied ... by some public demonstration or resolution of satisfaction at Northern Ireland's determination to remain in the Empire and that we would support her in her struggle to resist the movement to incorporate her territory against the will of her people within Southern Ireland.[132]

The government rightly ignored such a provocative proposal.

---

17 August 1950, Vol. 290, pp.1586-88.

[128] The Times, 23 December 1948 Clippings EA 207/4/271, pt.6.

[129] Evening Post, 27 December 1948.

[130] Fraser quoted in Belfast, Dominion, 24 December 1948.

[131] P.M.'s Dept. memorandum - Note on Necessity for

However, there was outrage in the Irish Republic when the British government introduced the Ireland Bill on 3 May 1949. While this legislation formalised the new relationship, it also confirmed the division of Ireland by affirming "the constitutional position and the territorial integrity of Northern Ireland".[133] Costello vehemently condemned this action,[134] which was duly recounted to Wellington.[135] While sympathetic to Dublin's objections, the government maintained a neutral stance, though, significantly, consequent New Zealand legislation (while based on the British Act) made no reference to partition.[136] Further, this act was passed under the new National government; Holland's strident stance in opposition did not carry over to the responsibility of the Treasury benches. In fact, the Grand Orange Lodge strongly protested that

---

Legislative Action in New Zealand Arising out of Constitutional Changes in Ireland and India, 9 April 1949, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.7.

[132] Holland to Nash, 21 January 1949, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.7.

[133] The Ireland Act 1949, 12 and 13 Geo. VI, Ch.41 in Mansergh Documents II, pp.821-25.

[134] Costello in Dail, 10 May 1949, Mansergh Documents II, pp.826-30.

[135] Aide Memoire to New Zealand Government from High Commissioner for Ireland, London, 20 May 1949, EA 207/4/2/1, pt.7.

[136] New Zealand Statutes, Republic of Ireland Act, No. 13, 4 September 1950.

their objections to the bill were being ignored.[137] But the fact was that New Zealand had long accepted Ireland's estrangement from the Commonwealth and welcomed the clarification of a new relationship.

It was significant that the Republic of India and Republic of Ireland Acts were passed simultaneously by the New Zealand Parliament on 4 September 1950, thereby confirming the post-war changes in the Commonwealth's structure. As a committed Commonwealth partner, New Zealand had an important stake in these developments and played a significant role in their resolutions. While Wellington welcomed India's self-determination, there was concern that Asian membership would have a disruptive and weakening effect on the established Commonwealth relationship. In response, a hard-line was taken against India's policies of republicanism and non-alignment. Such concepts were deemed inconsistent with New Zealand's perception of a united Commonwealth. However, New Zealand had to eventually bow to consensus and accept the changes necessary to accommodate India. By contrast, Eire had long ceased to be an effective member of the Commonwealth and New Zealand supported the clarification of a new friendly relationship. In effect, republicanism and non-alignment were explicit manifestations of the implicit basis of the Commonwealth - a free association of independent, if familial, nations.

---

[137] Secretary of Public Relations Committee of the Grand Orange Lodge of New Zealand to Minister of External Affairs, 22 August 1950, EA 159/4/3/3, pt.2.

But New Zealand remained committed to a more concrete conception of the Commonwealth and adamantly maintained this. The wider association of nations might change, but New Zealand had no desire to change with it, consciously re-emphasising traditional ties.

CHAPTER V

COMMONWEALTH DEFENCE:

THE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

> The natural starting point for the future progress in Commonwealth defence has been the idea of regional association. Geography largely decides which problems most directly concern the separate members of the Commonwealth.
>
> - United Kingdom White Paper, 'Central Organisation for Defence', October 1946, p.11.

The 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting and the subsequent White Paper on defence made clear that Commonwealth defence was based on a regional context. This reflected two factors. Firstly, Dominion sovereignty ensured that a unitary imperial strategy was impossible and that individual governments were responsible for their own defence policy. Each member state had "a special and distinct outlook on world affairs, dependent on its geographical position and its political and economic environment".[1] Australia and New Zealand had affirmed this in January 1944 in their ambitious manifesto of regional defence responsibility, the Canberra Pact. Further, the restoration of a national defence organisation - the Council of Defence - in 1946 showed the government's commitment to its own security, following the example of Britain and Australia.[2] Co-ordination of individual

---

[1] United Kingdom White Paper, 'Central Organisation for Defence', October 1946, p.10 EA 156/1/1, pt.2.

[2] Press statement, 19 July 1946, EA 81/14/1, pt.1.

defence policies would hopefully be achieved by the proposed exchange of joint service liaison officers.

Secondly, Britain's post-war decline and the consequent increased defence responsibility of the Dominions heightened the importance of regional defence arrangements. This was particularly so in the Pacific, as British naval power was no longer the guarantor of Australasian security. However, Australia and New Zealand were deemed one of the Commonwealth's "Main Support Areas" and the security of the two nations and their surrounding strategic zone was thus essential. While the embryonic United Nations intended to provide an effective system of universal collective security, regional defence arrangements were deemed compatible with this objective.[3] Further, the United Nations guaranteed that until international peace and stability were achieved, nations had "the inherent right of individual or collective self defence".[4] Australia and New Zealand thus markedly increased their defence ties; closer trans-Tasman links here had previously been limited by the "all encompassing" relationship with Britain. However, the special ANZAC relationship reflected a distinct rivalry, evident in Wellington's concern at a perceived Australian desire for regional leadership rather than partnership. Defence co-operation between the two regional Commonwealth partners was by no means plain sailing.

Despite the pretensions of the Canberra Pact, the two Tasman neighbours fully appreciated American pre-eminence in the Pacific and the fact that Australasian security could

---

[3]Article 52 of the United Nations Charter.

[4]Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

not be confined to a solely Commonwealth context. The United States was, however, unwilling to formalise a Pacific defence agreement with members of the Commonwealth. But regardless of a formal pact, American power implicitly guaranteed New Zealand's security. The Pacific was in effect an American lake, dominated by the United States Navy,[5] while American control of the former Japanese island territories in the north provided an effective barrier to Australasia. Further, there was no apparent Pacific threat: Japan was defeated, occupied and demilitarised; the Soviet Union was not a significant Pacific power, with limited naval resources; and China was internally racked with civil war.[6] New Zealand's regional defence concerns were therefore not pressing, they focused instead on the long term - ensuring against a revival of Japanese militarism and strategic planning with Commonwealth partners. The ultimate achievement of a concrete defence arrangement with Washington remained a desired end, but New Zealand was prepared to wait.

New Zealand's vital strategic zone was deemed to run in the line: Samoa - Fiji- New Hebrides - New Guinea, integrating with the interests of Australia and Britain. Enemy penetration beyond this line would seriously threaten essential communication links and national security.[7] It was therefore envisaged that in the event of war, New

---

[5] The American Navy was larger than the fleets of the rest of the world put together - Bartlett, p.34.

[6] MacGibbon, 'The Defence of New Zealand 1945-57', p.151.

[7] N.Z. C.O.S. Committee, Report on the Composition of the Armed Forces, 12 February 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

Zealand's naval and air forces would be concentrated here. However, command of the sea and air could only be maintained against a limited scale of attack, such as itinerant raiding. In the face of a major attack in the Pacific, the assistance of the United States was essential. The key to ensuring New Zealand's regional security was the maintenance of bases in the Pacific Islands. Fiji was of particular strategic importance. During the Second World War New Zealand had assumed responsibility for the colony's defence (evidence of the devolution of Commonwealth defence responsibility) and after the war maintained the use of naval and air facilities there. This situation was formalised in the agreement of January 1949, whereby the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were to act as defence advisors to the Governor of Fiji.[8] New Zealand also agreed to finance Fiji's air defence and pay for excess expenditure on military and naval requirements. In a stable and secure Pacific this was not an onerous responsibility.

While taking an increased role in Pacific security, the New Zealand government was not, in fact, committed to the priority of regional defence. The ideal of universal collective security remained the ultimate aim, while the ongoing commitment to the wider British Commonwealth was also present. Regional defence arrangements, while necessary precautions, were ultimately seen as part of a broader system. As Fraser emphasised after concluding the

---

[8] N.Z. Cabinet Meeting, 28 January 1949, CAB 1/1/1-1/7/1.

[9] P.M. to U.S. Charge d'Affaires, 25 February 1944, quoted Wood, The New Zealand People at War, p.319.

Canberra Pact, peace could only be preserved by "a world system of security and not under a number of systems of regional security".[9] Subsequently, at the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting, Fraser adamantly opposed Churchill's proposal of basing post-war collective security on regional councils. Such a division was seen as a disincentive to attaining universal peace, while also weakening Commonwealth solidarity.[10]

Wellington regarded the creation of any inclusive Asian/Pacific security system as an "unreal conception". As a small "British" nation, New Zealand was not prepared to partake in an association where there was no cultural homogeneity or "special community of interest and confidence in one another".[11] It was rather the British Commonwealth that provided these requirements. And, significantly, with the failure of the United Nations to achieve effective collective security by the late 1940's, New Zealand re-emphasised the familiarity of Commonwealth defence rather than develop new regional security arrangements. This did not, however, prevent continued overtures to the United States, which eventually culminated in the signing of the ANZUS Pact in 1951. In this case, the essential condition of "community of interest" was present, not to mention strategic necessity.

---

[10] B.K. Gordon, New Zealand Becomes a Pacific Power (Chicago, 1960), pp.224-26.

[11] P.M. to Acting Minister of External Affairs, 19 May 1946, The Australian-New Zealand Agreement (ed.)Robin Kay,(Wellington, 1977), pp.215-16.

I. JAPAN: FOCUS FOR REGIONAL CONCERN

The Japanese onslaught of 1941-42 created the most serious threat that New Zealand had faced. The Imperial defence strategy dramatically collapsed and Australia and New Zealand were left isolated and vulnerable. Both nations were determined to ensure there was no future revival of Japanese militarism and advocated a harsh peace settlement involving full disarmament and strict limitations on industrial capacity. Only by such a policy would the Pacific Dominions feel secure.

However, it was not the British Commonwealth but the United States that controlled the fate of Japan. General Douglas MacArthur, as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, enjoyed a "maximum of discretionary power",[12] virtually administering the country as his personal satrapy. Commonwealth and other allied nations were relegated to the role of junior, even token, partners. This was evident in the limited influence of the Far Eastern Commission (nominally responsible for the administration of Japan) and the Allied Council in Japan vis-à-vis the Supreme Commander. Carl Berendsen aptly described New Zealand's participation here as "window dressing".[13] The Canberra Pact's desire to see Australia and New Zealand play an active part in the post-war settlement in the Pacific appeared to be denied. In response to American dominance in Japan, the two Dominions attempted to assert maximum influence by unitary Commonwealth

---

[12] Wood, 'New Zealand Foreign Policy 1945-51', p.97.

[13] Gordon, p.239.

action. This was most notably illustrated by the joint British Commonwealth occupation force and the Canberra Conference of 1947. These developments were significant examples of inter-Commonwealth co-operation, but were essentially the manifestation of a weakened hand.

The joint occupation force in Japan provided a particularly interesting example of Commonwealth co-operation - an experiment in the integration of national forces. The force originated in proposals for the final assault against Japan. New Zealand agreed to provide a division of two brigades for this purpose.[14] However, the sudden end of the war in August 1945 dramatically changed plans. Given the huge American presence in occupied Japan, inter-Commonwealth discussion emphasised the need for an effective British presence to give some balance.[15] Rather than have separate Commonwealth forces, as Australia initially suggested, the United Kingdom stressed that a united force would most effectively represent Commonwealth interests and carry more weight with the United States:

> We feel very strongly that a joint Commonwealth force working together ... would afford a valuable demonstration of our essential unity in matters of common concern and a good augury for our future close co-operation in defence matters.[16]

---

[14] External Affairs memo, 'British Commonwealth Force of Occupation for Japan', 14 December 1945, EA 87/11/14, pt.1.

[15] Attlee to Fraser, 17 August 1945, quoted Gordon, p.235.

[16] Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Minister of External Affairs, 1 September 1945, The Surrender and Occupation of Japan (ed.) Robin Kay (Wellington, 1982), pp.1273-74.

Agreement for a combined force comprising servicemen from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and India was finalised 19 October 1945.[17] New Zealand agreed to provide an infantry brigade plus ancillary services and a fighter squadron. Fraser saw New Zealand's participation in the occupation force as appropriate, given the country's vital stake in the Pacific's future security. But he also maintained that:

> New Zealand should undertake this duty not only because it is in our interests as a Pacific country ... but also because ... we have been invited by the United Kingdom government to participate.[18]

The government was, in fact, aware that any Commonwealth force in Japan would be a token gesture and that manpower stringency would make the maintenance of a New Zealand contribution difficult. However, "solidarity with the Mother Country"[19] ensured that Britain's request for participation was followed. The role of the dutiful dominion remained pervasive.

The Commonwealth force was to be an integrated body under a single Commander-in-Chief. The Australian Chief of General Staff, Lt. General John Northcott, was appointed to this position, thereby placating Canberra's desire for a strong independent presence. While under the operational control of the Supreme Commander, the Commonwealth force controlled its own domestic administration

---

[17] Australian Minister of External Affairs to New Zealand Minister of External Affairs, 19 October 1945, EA 87/11/14, pt.1.

[18] Minister of External Affairs to Dominions' Secretary, 30 September, Contents of Press Statement, Surrender and Occupation of Japan, p.1287.

[19] Ibid.

and activities. In the execution of this, the Commander-in-Chief was responsible to the participating governments through the specially constituted Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia. This unique institution was based in Melbourne, comprising the Australian Chiefs of Staff and service respresentatives from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and India. Reflecting the increased devolution of defence responsibility, this organisation was seen as an important innovation:

> a further development in the closer integration of British Commonwealth co-operation, ensuring that each of the governments concerned has a full and effective voice in the joint undertaking.[20]

Despite the inter-Commonwealth agreement, American approval of the force was not so forthcoming. Australian-American negotiations dragged on into 1946, often over minor technicalities. Wellington was not impressed and the delay allowed the government to reappraise the value of the proposed force. Canberra was duly informed that:

> in view of the time which has elapsed since the first tentative announcement was made regarding the provision of this force and the way in which negotiations have dragged, enthusiasm for it has flagged considerably in New Zealand. There is a general feeling that this force is not needed and it appears questionable whether in the circumstances it is likely to yield any increase in British Commonwealth prestige.[21]

Thus, even before any troops had arrived in Japan, the government was seriously questioning the relevance and viability of the project. Such a half-heartedness was to mark New Zealand's participation in the occupation.

---

[20]Australian Minister of External Affairs to New Zealand Counterpart, 19 October 1945, EA 87/11/14, pt.1.

[21]Minister of External Affairs to Australian Counterpart, 19 December 1945, Surrender and Occupation of Japan, p.1323.

Commonwealth-American arrangements were finalised by 1 February 1946[22] and the New Zealand force subsequently arrived in Japan by late March. This comprised of an infantry brigade under Brigadier K.L. Stewart - formed by transferring from Italy all single men of the 13th, 14th and 15th reinforcements of 2 NZEF for a 6 month period - and 14 Squadron RNZAF. The New Zealand presence amounted to 13% of the total Commonwealth force.[23] Initially given control of the Hiroshima prefecture, the BCOF's responsibility ultimately extended to south-east Honshu and the island of Shikoku. Military occupation involved the general tasks of maintaining security, demilitarisation and disposal of armaments, and repatriation. However, the responsibilities of military government and intelligence remained the sole prerogative of the United States.[24] The force was thus on an unequal footing with the Americans, while its four brigades were a miniscule presence compared to the military dominance of the United States. The policy of tokenism was very apparent.

Formal directives were issued by Canberra on behalf of the contributing governments to the Commander-in-Chief 9 August 1946 (instructions had previously been in a draft form). The objectives of BCOF were thus officially spelt out:

---

[22] Joint Statement by the Governments of U.K., Australia, New Zealand and India, 1 February 1946, The Surrender and Occupation of Japan, pp.1353-55.

[23] Memorandum, 'Withdrawal or Retention of J. Force', 30 November 1946, EA 156/1//1, pt.2.

[24] Joint Statement, 1 February 1946, op. cit.

(a) To represent worthily the British Commonwealth in the occupation of Japan

(b) To maintain and enhance British Commonwealth prestige and influence in the eyes of the Japanese and of our allies

(c) To illustrate to, and impress on, the Japanese people, as far as possible, the democratic way and purpose of life.[25]

In addition, it was emphasised that in furtherance of Commonwealth co-operation, the Commander-in-Chief was to foster:

> in your headquarters and in force and base units the principle of the maximum integration of services and personnel of each country contributing forces to BCOF.[26]

To achieve this, the directive made clear that national contingents were not independent units but part of a unified force. For example, national commanders were required to consult with the Commonwealth Commander-in-Chief before communicating with their national authorities. This was a significant restriction compared to the relative autonomy Dominion forces enjoyed in the Second World War.

The maintenance of a full New Zealand contingent in Japan was a considerable drain on manpower, given wider post-war requirements. And as the initial brigade was to be relieved after 6 months service, an extensive domestic recruitment and training programme was required.[27] The first relief force of 4,200 finally left New Zealand during June/July 1946.[28] This force in turn required relief after

---

[25]Directive to the Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, 9 August 1946 EA 81/4/3.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Minister of Defence, Fred Jones, broadcast an appeal for volunteers as early as 5 February 1946, The Surrender and Occupation of Japan, pp.1361-64.

12 months, thereby providing a continual numbers problem. The New Zealand Council of Defence discussed this dilemma in February 1947, highlighting the fact that the volunteer system could not maintain the required troops.[29] Consequently, the Minister of Defence, Fred Jones, announced 8 July 1947, the intention of reducing the infantry contingent to 2,400, while maintaining the 300 strong air component (the latter received valuable training experience in Japan).[30] A second relief force thus sailed for Japan in July 1947 numbering only 1,768.[31]

As well as the problems of recruitment, the integrated structure of the BCOF provided further complications. This policy was a considerable departure from the relative independence of the New Zealand expeditionary force in the war, albeit the differences in scale. However, Wellington had not fully appreciated this, as the initial directive to the New Zealand Commander was based on instructions given to General Freyberg in the Middle East.[32] Such an anomaly inevitably caused conflict with BCOF headquarters. The New Zealand Commander, Brigadier K.L. Stewart, complained soon after his arrival of the "difficulties and differences of opinion" with the Commander-in-Chief, General Northcott.[33] Stewart regarded the integration policy as excessive, maintaining that a self contained force was a more effective arrangement. Northcott also highlighted the problem:

---

[28] AGR Chief of General Staff, 20 June 1947, AJHR, 1948, H-19, p.1.

[29] Minutes of Meeting of N.Z. Council of Defence, 20 February 1947, EA 81/14/4, pt.1.

[30] NZPD, 8 July 1947, Vol. 276, p.284.

[31] AGR Chief of General Staff, 20 June 1948, AJHR, 1949, H-19.

[32] Memorandum for the Commander, N.Z. Army Force of

> There are differences in organisation as well as psychological variations between elements of BCOF which make complete integration difficult ... it must be realised that all national contingents ... existed as independent forces for many months before their concentration in Japan.[34]

It was consequently necessary for the Chiefs of Staff to issue new directives, making explicit the extensive authority of BCOF headquarters vis-à-vis the national responsibility of the New Zealand Commander.[35]

Problems of morale were also present. The New Zealand troops found devastated post-war Japan an alien and inhospitable environment, with limited amenities and frequent supply shortages.[36] There was also resentment that the American forces were perceived as enjoying superior facilities. The New Zealand press subsequently highlighted troop dissatisfaction, for example, a Dominion headline 7 July 1947 reported "J Force men say food monotonous and leave scarce". In response to this negative publicity, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of General Staff travelled to Japan to inspect facilities and improve morale. In a broadcast to the New Zealand forces, Jones admitted:

> that conditions in Japan have not always been as good as they are now ... but a vast improvement has been made...[37]

The New Zealand government was never particularly enthusiastic about J force and was given the further opportunity to reappraise its participation in late 1947, in the wake of Britain and India's decision to withdraw.

Occupation, 25 October 1945, EA 87/11/4, pt.1.

[33]Commander, 2nd NZEF (Japan) to Chief of General Staff, 7 April 1946, Surrender and Occupation of Japan, p.1370-73.

[34]Report by Lt.Gen. J. Northcott, 25 July 1946, EA 87/11/14, pt.1.

[35]Minutes of N.Z. Chiefs of Staff Committee,

Given this situation and the ongoing difficulty of providing further relief when the current force completed its tour of duty in July-August 1948, the government saw the opportunity to exit. Cabinet discussed the matter with General Robertson, the new Commander-in-Chief, in February 1948. Despite his plea for some continued presence, Fraser was adamant that the entire contingent should return.[38] The required six months notice was given in April and the last New Zealand Army and Air Force personnel left Japan 25 November 1948.

The occupation force provided a novel experiment in regional Commonwealth co-operation; integrating the nations most concerned with the future security of the Far East and the Pacific into a single force, with command based in Australia. This reflected the increased devolution of defence responsibility to a regional context. However, a unitary force appeared to contradict the precepts of Dominion autonomy (and significantly Canada and South Africa did not take part) and was certainly difficult to achieve in practice. But by such a policy the Commonwealth hoped to have maximum influence in Japan vis-à-vis the United States. Ironically, while the post-war era confirmed Dominion self-determination, the new balance of power - a world dominated by two great powers - meant that Commonwealth members needed greater co-operation to make their presence

---

10 May 1946, EA 81/4/2a; Memo for Commander, 2 NZEF (Japan) 22 October 1946, EA 87/11/4, pt.1.

[36]Brig. K.L. Stewart to Army Secretary, 20 August 1946, Surrender and Occupation of Japan, pp.1411-13; Brig. K.L. Stewart to Chief of General Staff, 8 October 1946, ibid. p.1414.

[37]Transcript of Jones' broadcast to N.Z. Forces, 22 March 1947, EA 87/11/30, pt.1.

felt. The BCOF was thus a manifestation of a weakened Commonwealth, setting the precedent for a similar organisation in the Korean War. While playing a useful role in the military occupation and maintaining a visible Commonwealth presence, the force was really a token exercise and had limited influence with the Americans. New Zealand was quick to recognise this, while also facing the ongoing problems of recruitment, integration and poor morale. New Zealand's participation in the force was not a major success story, but it did highlight the changed international environment.

The need for Commonwealth solidarity in relation to American policy in Japan was also the catalyst of the Canberra Conference on the Japanese Peace Treaty, 26 August-1 September 1947.[39] As with the BCOF, the Australian government organised the proceedings; evidence of Canberra's apparent regional Commonwealth leadership. The conference was also significant as the first major Commonwealth meeting held outside the Northern Hemisphere, further illustrating the special interest of the South Pacific Dominions in the Japanese peace settlement. Canberra and Wellington were particularly concerned that the United States seemed increasingly prepared to rehabilitate Japan as a strong bastion against the spread of Communism. MacArthur's claim in July 1947 that Japan had undergone a "spiritual revolution"[40] and was ready to return to the international community was incredulously received. By contrast, the Tasman neighbours saw their security dependent

---

[38]Report of N.Z. Cabinet Meeting with Commander-in-Chief, BCOF, 7 February 1948, Surrender and Occupation of Japan, pp.1474-77.

on a harsh peace, ensuring there could be no revival of Japanese expansionism. It was in this atmosphere that the Commonwealth delegations (including the newly independent India and Pakistan, and Burma making its brief appearance as a de facto dominion) met to discuss the issues involved in formalising a Japanese peace treaty and to find consensus for dealing with Washington.

Fraser strongly expressed the Australasian viewpoint:

> We of New Zealand and Australia are very anxious that the other members of the British Commonwealth should understand our position, politically and geographically ... and appreciate our particular interests and the dangers which the future may hold for us.[41]

While not advocating a Carthaginian peace , Fraser maintained that "the Japanese must be made to feel that they did start something" and that all war potential be eliminated. The Conference consequently agreed that Japanese armament industries should be prohibited and that strict limits be imposed on industrial capacity.[42]

However, the loose structure of the Commonwealth could not provide a strong counterpoise to American policy. In fact, the "MacArthur Constitution" was already being formulated, independently of the other allied powers. New Zealand realistically recognised that the Canberra proposals meant little without the agreement of the United States,"whose part in the defeat of Japan and in the future control of Japan was and will be almost decisive."[43]

---

[39] Japanese Peace Settlement, Report of British Commonwealth Conference, Canberra 1947 , AJHR, 1947, A-12.

[40] Gordon, p.242.

[41] Fraser's opening speech at first session, 26 August 1947, EA 102/9/24.

Despite the Canberra Pact's assertion of the need for a strong Australian-New Zealand say in the post-war Pacific settlement, they were to have a minimal impact, notwithstanding their vested interests. The experiences of the BCOF and the Canberra Conference were thus sobering ones for the Commonwealth - evidence of its diminished influence in the post-war world.

II. DEFENCE TIES WITH AUSTRALIA: REGIONAL LEADERSHIP OR PARTNERSHIP?

The Canberra Pact provided a significant basis for developments in trans-Tasman defence co-operation. While many of its provisions were overly ambitious, the agreement was a conscious response to the changed strategic situation in the Commonwealth. With the decline of the United Kingdom's defence capacity, Australia and New Zealand clearly had to take increased responsibility for their regional security - a main support area for the Commonwealth. Given its geographic position and wartime experience, Australia regarded itself as the appropriate Commonwealth leader in the Pacific. Thus, under the assertive leadership of Herbert Evatt, the Minister of External Affairs, Australia took the initiative, with New Zealand often confined to a supporting role. The Canberra Pact was itself primarily an Australian creation, while Canberra represented the Commonwealth on the Allied Council in Japan and co-ordinated arrangements for the BCOF. Australia also claimed administrative responsibility for joint Commonwealth ventures in the Pacific, such as the proposed Joint Intelligence Bureau.

New Zealand was equally willing to increase its capacity in the Pacific, as evidenced at the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting. But as a more isolated and more Anglophile nation, with a government strongly committed to the ideal of universal collective security, the importance of regional defence did not loom as large as across the Tasman. Nevertheless, Wellington strongly resented any implication of Australian dominance in the Pacific, insisting on an equitable partnership. A distinct trans-Tasman rivalry thus prevailed; a symptom of the special ANZAC relationship. New Zealand was clearly not prepared to accept her Australian cousin as a regional surrogate for Mother Britain.

As discussed in Chapter I, the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting emphasised the increased regional distribution of Commonwealth defence responsibility. The Australian delegation strongly supported this move, taking it a step further by advocating the principle of:

> a Dominion acting in certain regions or for certain purposes on behalf of the British Commonwealth, including the United Kingdom itself.[44]

The proposed exchange of service liaison staffs aimed to co-ordinate such regional initiatives. The constitutional implications of this idea were contentious, but Australia saw such a role as its due, with Chifley expressing to the meeting that:

> There should be assigned to the Australian government machinery, responsibility for the development of the defence aspects of matters relating to regional security in the Pacific, in which the United Kingdom,

---

[42] Minutes of Canberra Conference, 28 August 1947, EA 102/9/26, pt.1.

[43] External Affairs Report on Canberra Conference, 30 September 1947, EA 102/9/3, pt.1.

> Australia and New Zealand are concerned, and provision should be made for the representation of the United Kingdom and New Zealand at appropriate levels on such machinery.[45]

New Zealand did not endorse this proposal of Australian hegemony. Reporting from London, Frank Corner expressed concern that by such a policy Australia "might swamp New Zealand"[46]; "a leadership which we do not trust as much as the British".[47] This distinct rivalry ensured that while there was consensus on the need for effective bi-lateral defence co-operation, the terms involved were not to be easily agreed on.

Australia reiterated its views on regional defence co-operation in formal proposals to the New Zealand government, 28 May 1947.[48] This envisaged Australian defence machinery taking responsibility for the development and administration of joint security activities in the Pacific; thereby "acting as agents for the British Commonwealth" in peace and war. New Zealand and the United Kingdom were guaranteed full and equal representation in this arrangement by constant inter-government communication and by the attendance of their High Commissioners and service representatives at appropriate Australian defence institutions, when their interests were involved. Proposed ventures like the Pacific Joint Intelligence Bureau would thus function in this way. Canberra saw the established

---

[44] PMM (46) 8, quoted in Australian Government Memorandum, 'Co-operation in Commonwealth Defence', 28 May 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

[45] Ibid., p.8.

[46] Corner to McIntosh, 31 May 1946, EA 153/23/1, pt.1.

[47] Corner to McIntosh and Wilson, 27 May 1946, EA 153/23/1, pt.1.

[48] Chifley to Fraser, 28 May 1947, enclosed Australian Government memorandum 'Co-operation in Commonwealth Defence'

practice of Australian and New Zealand troops serving under British command (as was the case with naval and air forces in the war) as the obvious precedent; now given a regional reversal of roles.

In contrast with this desired arrangement, the Australian government highlighted what it saw as the unsatisfactory organisation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia. As a specially constituted multi-national institution administering the Commonwealth force in Japan, this was usurping the authority of the Australian Chiefs of Staff. Canberra strongly maintained (as it had at the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting) that control and maintenance of the BCOF should be transferred solely to itself, with the other contributing countries represented by their service liaison staff. Having already had both American and British forces working through its defence machinery in the Second World War, Australia saw no reason for this not to apply to the small Commonwealth force in Japan.[49] In effect, this proposal only really changed the theory of the BCOF's administration and not the practice; the Australian Chiefs of Staff already formed the permanent basis of the JCOSA and functioned as its agent. However, the sensitive area of Australia's national aspirations was at stake.

Canberra's proposals were not well received in Wellington; Australia appeared to be seeking regional

---

and memorandum by Australian Defence Committee on the JCOSA, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

[49]Memo by Australian Defence Committee on the JCOSA, submitted to Fraser, 28 May 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

leadership rather than the partnership inherent in Commonwealth co-operation and the terms of the Canberra Pact. While there was recognition that Australia was "the major partner in the British Commonwealth in the Pacific",[50] New Zealand was unwilling to see Australian defence machinery assume administrative authority in joint undertakings. As Fraser emphasised in his reply to Chifley:

> The New Zealand government are at all times anxious to co-operate with Australia on the basis of equality, but in the machinery proposed, that full measure of equality that should characterise co-operation between our two governments is not adequately provided.[51]

Fraser was adamant that any inter-Commonwealth Pacific enterprise (such as the BCOF and the proposed Joint Intelligence Bureau) should be controlled by special joint machinery, like the present Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia, thereby guaranteeing full equality in decision making:

> I feel that any other arrangement is alien to the general political agreement to which we have both subscribed and of the customary partnership of our people.[52]

Transferring responsibility to the Australian defence authorities was seen to potentially restrict New Zealand's participation. These objections were endorsed by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.[53]

In discussions with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lord Montgomery, in July 1947, Fraser

---

[50] Foss Shanahan, 'Co-operation in Commonwealth Defence', 4 June 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

[51] Fraser to Chifley, 14 July 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

[52] Ibid.

[53] N.Z. Chiefs of Staff Committee, 'Co-operation with Australia in Commonwealth Defence', 25 July 1947,EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

strongly criticised Canberra's policy as "Australian imperialism".[54] However, the United Kingdom's policy of maximum devolution of Commonwealth defence, supported Australian responsibility for strategic planning and joint operations in Asia and the Pacific.[55] Thus, while recognising New Zealand's concerns, Montgomery was not prepared to champion them. Minor differences over procedure should not, he declared, hinder the two nations' basic unity of purpose. Montgomery claimed that New Zealand's interests would be effectively represented by service liaison staff in Australia, and that once this presence was established, the efficacy of Canberra's proposals would be apparent.[56] New Zealand was not, however, convinced.

A trans-Tasman impasse was clearly apparent, highlighted by the August discussions between Foss Shanahan, the Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, and Sir Frederick Shedden, the Australian Secretary of Defence. Shedden guaranteed that while regional defence activities would function through Australian machinery, New Zealand was ensured an equal voice; service representatives would be present at all levels of decision making, while final policy decisions would remain the responsibility of the contributing governments.[57] Shanahan was not compliant, maintaining that a basis of equality could only be

---

[54] Cabinet discussions with Viscount Montgomery, 17 July 1947, EA 156/1/1, pt.2; Chiefs of Staff Committee, minutes of meeting with Montgomery, 17-18 July 1947, EA 81/4/2a, pt.4.

[55] Col. H.E. Gilbert to Brig. W.G. Gentry, 7 July 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

[56] Note by Montgomery, 'Proposed Organisation for Defence in the South-West Pacific', Wellington, 17 July 1947, EA 81/4/2a.

achieved by a special joint Chiefs of Staff structure.[58]

Shedden recounted that his government was totally opposed to the continuation or extension of a body like the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia. This was a cumbersome institution, denying Australia its logical responsibility and was quite unsuitable to function in wartime. The United Kingdom, he contended, had no qualms about working through Australian defence machinery, thus making New Zealand's intransigence difficult to appreciate. Further, if New Zealand insisted on a special bi-lateral arrangement for defence co-operation, it would be at cross purposes with Britain and isolated from wider inter-Commonwealth collaboration.[59]

Extensive communication between the two Prime Ministers did not resolve their differences.[60] New Zealand was prepared to accept Australian institutions taking responsibility for rudimentary policy, but affirmed that high level administrative decisions should be made by a special joint agency, responsible to all participating governments. The Canberra Conference in September allowed Fraser and Chifley to personally discuss the issue. The Australians were at pains to guarantee that New Zealand's participation in its defence machinery would be on a

---

[57]Note by Shedden on Discussions with Shanahan, 15 August 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

[58]Report by Shanahan on meeting with Shedden, 22 August 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt. 1.

[59]Note by Shedden, 15 August 1947, op. cit.

[60]Chifley to Fraser, 13 August 1947; Fraser to Chifley, 25 August 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

basis of equality, ensuring sovereign control of policy and the assent of New Zealand representatives at all levels. If necessary, this would be confirmed by a formal proviso.[61]

Official New Zealand policy was still not satisfied,[62] but given the United Kingdom's acceptance of the general Australian proposals and support for the immediate disbandment of the JCOSA,[63] the government was left with few options. Fraser thus informed Chifley on 20 October that in the circumstances, New Zealand accepted the dissolution of the JCOSA and its replacement by the Australian Chiefs of Staff and service representatives (this formally took effect on 31 December 1947).[64] In turn, Colonel L.S. Duff, the Chiefs of Staff representative on the JCOSA, was appointed New Zealand's Joint Service Liaison Officer in Australia. Despite this concession, Fraser still maintained that future joint Commonwealth ventures needed the administration of a special agency, responsible to all participating governments. Shanahan, however, told Duff that providing New Zealand was given an equal say, the government would not press for such an arrangement.[65]

---

[61] High Commissioner, Canberra to Shanahan, 1 September 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt. 1.

[62] Memo by Shanahan, 'Co-operation in British Commonwealth Defence', 11 September 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

[63] Memo from Head of New Zealand Joint Service Liaison Staff, London to Secretary, Chief of Staff Committee, 2 October 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.2.

[64] Fraser to Chifley, 20 October 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

[65] Shanahan to Duff, 23 October 1947, EA 156/10/2, pt.1.

The protracted Australian-New Zealand disagreement was essentially a product of the special trans-Tasman relationship - a mixture of fraternity and rivalry. Close defence ties were essential, but New Zealand wanted an equitable partnership, not the implication of Australian precedence. Australia was not the Mother Country and the appearance of an Australian regional leadership was unacceptable. While ultimately accepting the practice of working through Canberra's defence machinery, Wellington emphasised this was on the basis of equality. Trans-Tasman defence co-operation did expand on this basis, with the Australian High Commissioner, Roden Cutler, stressing in March 1948 "it is obvious that Australia must work very closely with New Zealand in the Pacific".[66] Developments such as the arrival of Australian service liaison staff in March 1948, combined naval exercises, visits between military leaders and the training of New Zealand officers at Duntroon showed a wide-ranging defence relationship.

Commonwealth defence arrangements in the Pacific were taken a step further with the development of ANZAM in 1949. Under this arrangement, Australian defence machinery, in conjunction with New Zealand and United Kingdom representatives, took responsibility for initiating contingency planning for the defence of sea and air communications in Malaya and the Pacific. ANZAM was somewhat nebulous, with planning limited to the service level, involving no

---

[66] Dominion, 20 March 1948.

government commitments and not intruding on internal defence policy. Nevertheless, it was a significant achievement in Commonwealth defence, representing a logical progression in Australia's proposals of regional co-operation. New Zealand was now seemingly prepared to accept Australian institutions taking the initiative in regional defence.

The origins of ANZAM can be seen in the calls for closer regional defence co-operation, highlighted at the Prime Ministers' Meeting of October 1948.[67] Given the mounting cold war tensions and the impotency of the United Nations, Britain suggested that the existing inter-Commonwealth service representation should be utilised for more effective defence planning and co-ordination, not just consultation.[68] Ironically, Britain had achieved a greater level of military co-operation with its European partners in the Western Union, than that attained in the more familial Commonwealth. It was therefore desirable that Commonwealth members should try to achieve similar results in the Pacific.

Canberra subsequently proposed that the Australian Defence Committee and accredited New Zealand and British service representatives should examine the objectives and strategy of Commonwealth defence in the Pacific and consider peacetime planning.[69] London endorsed this initiative and proposed sending a special service

---

[67]Summary of Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, October 1948, EA 153/26/1.

[68]Report by Australian Defence Committee on U.K. Paper PMM(48) 'The World Situation and its Defence Aspects', 11 November 1948, EA 156/1/1, pt.3.

[69]Ibid.

mission to Australia in mid 1949 to further developments.[70] New Zealand also welcomed these moves, although the government recognised that in the event of war, the Pacific was unlikely to be a vital theatre.[71] There was consequent concern that Australia was putting too much emphasis on regional defence rather than wider Commonwealth strategy.[72] New Zealand thus saw regional defence as more of a long term precaution than an immediate concern.

To provide a clearer view of regional defence responsibility, Fraser suggested to Chifley,20 February 1949, a joint meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and the British service mission.[73] These discussions took place in Melbourne 22-26 August, amid considerable press speculation.[74] Clearly, the logistics of modern warfare meant that peacetime defence planning was essential. It was, therefore, agreed that the Australian Defence Committee and the accredited representatives of Britain and New Zealand should take the initiative in planning the defence of sea and air communications in South-East Asia and the Pacific.[75] Australian defence machinery was now clearly established as the Commonwealth's regional agent and New Zealand accepted this arrangement by ensuring its interests were fully represented. Planning

---

[70]Attlee to Chifley,29 December 1948,EA 156/1/1, pt.3.

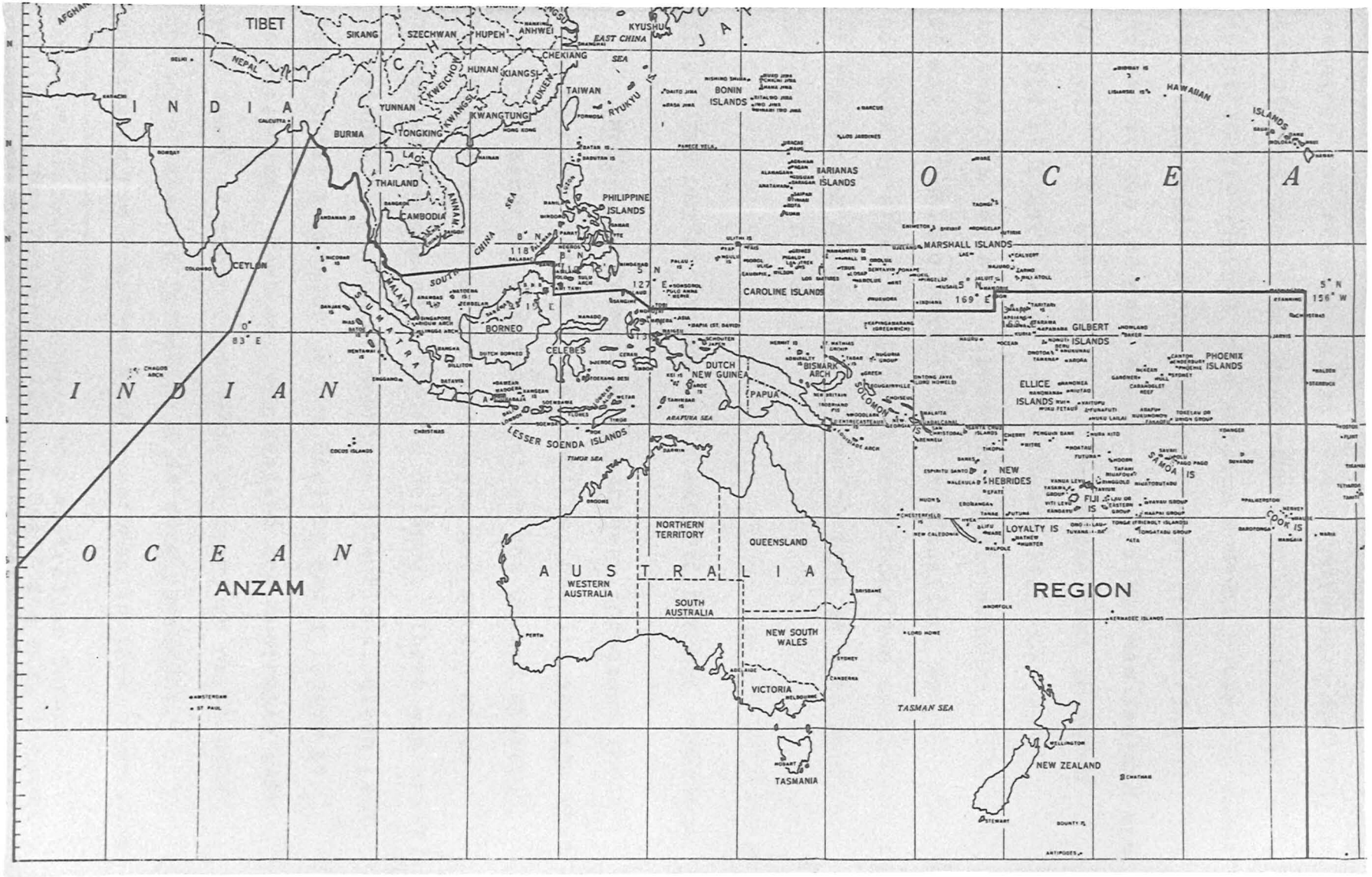
[71]Memo,'New Zealand's Defence Policy in the Pacific', 30 April 1949, EA 156/1/1, pt.3.

[72]Air Vice Marshall A. de T. Nevil to Shanahan, 22 February 1949, EA 156/1/1, pt.3.

[73]Fraser to Chifley,20 February 1949,EA 156/1/1, pt.3.

[74]Dominion, 19 August 1949; Evening Post, 23 August 1949.

[75]Meeting of Australian Defence Committee,19 August 1949


TIBET
SIKANG
SZECHWAN
HUPEN
ANHWEI
KYUSHU
EAST CHINA SEA
CHEKIANG
HUNAN
KIANGSI
FUKIEN
TAIWAN
FORMOSA
RYUKYU
BONIN ISLANDS
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
NEPAL
INDIA
YUNNAN
KWEICHOW
KWANGSI
KWANGTUNG
HONG KONG
BURMA
TONGKING
LAOS
THAILAND
CAMBODIA
ANNAM
SOUTH CHINA SEA
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
BARIANAS ISLANDS
OCEA
MARSHALL ISLANDS
CAROLINE ISLANDS
CEYLON
MALAYA
SUMATRA
BORNEO
CELEBES
DUTCH NEW GUINEA
BISMARK ARCH
PAPUA
SOLOMON IS
GILBERT ISLANDS
ELLICE ISLANDS
PHOENIX ISLANDS
INDIAN
ARAFURA SEA
LESSER SOENDA ISLANDS
TIMOR SEA
NEW HEBRIDES
FIJI IS
SAMOA IS
LOYALTY IS
COOK IS
OCEAN
ANZAM
NORTHERN TERRITORY
QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
NEW SOUTH WALES
VICTORIA
TASMAN SEA
REGION
NEW ZEALAND
TASMANIA
NORFOLK
KERMADEC ISLANDS
LORD HOWE
CHRISTMAS
COCOS ISLANDS
ANTIPODES

did not, however, extend to internal security, which remained the responsibility of the individual nations; and did not commit any governments to action, being specifically limited to a service context. Various names were suggested: ANZIM, ANZAC, though it was finally agreed to use the term ANZAM - Australia, New Zealand and Malaya.[76] In wartime it was envisaged that an ANZAM Chiefs of Staff (based on the Australian COS) would control the region's overall strategic defence. However, it was recognised that in such a situation, ANZAM could not hope to effectively function without the co-operation of the United States and needed to link in with American policy.

III. THE UNITED STATES AND A PACIFIC DEFENCE AGREEMENT

While the Commonwealth partners increased their defence co-operation in the Pacific, reality ensured that regional security was dependent on the United States. The Second World War had destroyed any notion of an exclusive Commonwealth Pacific defence. There was still a residual suspicion of American intentions, given past territorial expansion in the Pacific and a legacy of isolationism. However, New Zealand and Australia were very aware of their dependence on American naval power and were eager to formalise a defence agreement. Washington had rebuffed such overtures in 1946, even when

---

Notes of Discussions between the Australian Defence Committee, New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and U.K. Liaison Officer, 22-26 August 1949, EA 156/2/4/1, pt.1.

[76] Ibid.

the Commonwealth members tried to bargain with base rights in their Pacific territories. New Zealand was particularly concerned in securing protection against a revival of Japanese aggression, but was more prepared than Australia to accept the implicit guarantee provided by the United States' strategic and military strength. Nevertheless, Wellington regarded a formal defence arrangement with Washington as the desired end.

The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Defence Paper of 1948 supported the creation of an "exclusive" Pacific collective security agreement, incorporating the English speaking nations of the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.[77] Here were nations sharing the essential features of a common heritage and mutual confidence. It was recognised that, given American dominance in the Pacific, full scale hostilities were unlikely there, compared with Europe and the Middle East. However, an effective regional defence pact would ensure the security of New Zealand's vital strategic interests and communications, thereby leaving the government free to deploy its limited resources to "the fullest effect in the vital theatre of operations".[78] The assurance of regional security was thus the desired condition for a wider Commonwealth commitment.

Australia and New Zealand reiterated the importance of a Pacific Pact at the Prime Ministers' Meeting in October 1948.[79] Evatt discussed the matter further in

---

[77]Chiefs of Staff Paper,'Arrangements for World Security and the Position of New Zealand',24 September 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[78]Ibid.

[79]PMM(48) Minutes of 11th Meeting, Confidential Annex, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

Washington in November, but the American administration remained unwilling. Events in 1949 gave further impetus to a Pacific security agreement: the apparent American intention to rehabilitate Japan and end the occupation; an increased Communist threat in Asia, highlighted by Mao Tse-Tung's victory in the Chinese Civil War; and the promulgation of the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO offered an appropriate model for the Pacific. The Speech from the Throne, 28 June 1949, in expressing support for the North Atlantic Treaty, declared "that this community of interest would provide a basis for the conclusion of similar arrangements in the Pacific region".[80] The United States, however, had no intention of immediately assuming similar responsibilities in the Pacific, where it was already the supreme power.[81]

In response to the United States' adamancy, Australia, New Zealand and Britain increased their own inter-Commonwealth regional defence planning as highlighted by ANZAM. It was hoped that such developments would provide the foundation for wider security arrangements. However, Fraser recognised the viability of the existing modus vivendi and was not going to press the issue with Washington. As he realistically stated, 13 September 1949:

> the Pacific Pact has been discussed ... the government was doing everything possible in connection with that matter, but New Zealand could not expect to compel a huge country like America to act.[82]

---

[80] NZPD, Vol. 285, 28 June 1949, p.2.

[81] Emphasised by Secretary of State Acheson in Statement, 18 May 1949, quoted Reese, p.114.

[82] NZPD, Vol. 287, p.2062.

New Zealand was content to shelter under the implicit shadow of the United States until the time was appropriate to forge a formal treaty.

The post-war Commonwealth saw a devolution of defence responsibility to a regional context. Clearly, the debacle of the imperial defence strategy in the Pacific in 1941, Britain's weakened position and established Dominion sovereignty meant that New Zealand was obliged to play a more active role in local security. The Canberra Pact thus provided an ambitious basis for New Zealand and Australia to assert Commonwealth leadership in the Pacific. Wellington was, however, concerned that Canberra seemed to want regional dominance rather than partnership, and insisted that defence co-operation be on the basis of equality. But Australasian security could not be confined to a solely Commonwealth context. The United States dominated the Pacific and controlled the destiny of Japan, despite attempts by Canberra and Wellington to influence developments. To ensure their security, New Zealand and Australia therefore desired to formalise a defence arrangement with Washington. The Truman administration was, however, unwilling to make any formal commitments, ensuring that Pacific defence arrangements remained confined to a Commonwealth context, such as ANZAM. The absence of the United States necessarily limited the effectiveness of Commonwealth defence, but the implicit security provided by American power was recognised.

CHAPTER VI

NEW ZEALAND AND "IMPERIAL DEFENCE"

> We know that we have to play our part not only in the defence of this country but also in the defence of the British Commonwealth.
>
> - Frederick Jones, Minister of Defence, 14 July 1948, NZPD, Vol. 280, p.607.

Despite the post-war emphasis on regional defence, New Zealand's security could not be confined to this context. The legacy of two world wars implied that any future conflict would again be on a global scale. The Labour government remained committed to the establishment of a system of universal collective security and hoped that, despite its shortcomings, the United Nations would realise this. In turn, the Pacific was seemingly secure under the undisputed dominance of the United States. Wellington remained concerned about a possible Japanese revival, but was prepared to accept the implicit guarantee provided by American naval and air power.

By contrast, Europe was the focus of strategic concern. The Western/Soviet division of the continent was entrenched and relations between the two blocs progressively deteriorated. In the event of war, Europe would provide the vital strategic theatre. Faced with mounting cold war tension and an ineffective United Nations, New Zealand looked to traditional Commonwealth

defence ties, committing its surplus military resources to the defence of wider British interests. This was a tried and proven collective security system, whereby New Zealand defended itself by defending the wider Commonwealth. However, in the event of war, the Commonwealth could no longer function in isolation, actively needing allied support. By contributing to the Commonwealth's defence, New Zealand was, therefore, also contributing to the wider Western alliance based on the power of the United States.

In New Zealand the continuing imperial connection was particularly evident in the organisation of the armed forces. They were standardised and trained on the British model, utilising mainly British equipment. The Royal New Zealand Navy, for example, borrowed most of its ships from the Admiralty on the condition that they were maintained to full British standards.[1] There was also considerable staff interchange; until 1960, at least one of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff was a British officer on secondment.[2] The New Zealand armed forces thus functioned as a microcosm of their United Kingdom counterparts, ensuring effective collaboration. Further, following the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting, joint service liaison staffs were established in London and Melbourne. This system aimed to ensure that

---

[1] N.Z. COS Committee, 'Report on the Composition of the Armed Forces of New Zealand', 12 February 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

[2] I.C. MacGibbon, 'The Defence of New Zealand 1945-1957', pp.147-148.

Commonwealth partners were fully informed of each other's policies, facilitating full consultation and collaboration. New Zealand was eager to achieve this end.

Commonwealth membership did not, however, involve any definite military commitments. As sovereign nations, members determined their own defence policies, relative to their individual needs. While free to provide mutual support in wartime, there was no binding commitment to do so - as South Africa's potential and Eire's actual neutrality in 1939 illustrated. Commonwealth defence was thus an implicit, rather than an explicit alliance, strongly contrasted by the concrete security obligations developing between Britain and its European neighbours. However, in New Zealand's case, there was a definite understanding that it would "sink or swim"[3] with the United Kingdom. The continuity of emotional and economic dependency ensured that New Zealand's first line of defence remained wherever British interests were threatened. New Zealand thus willingly committed itself to the Commonwealth's security. As Peter Fraser emphasised in 1949, the country's destiny was "wholly and completely bound up in the British Commonwealth".[4]

---

[3]Stated by Michael Joseph Savage at the 1937 Imperial Conference.

[4]Evening Post, 20 May 1949.

I. THE COMMONWEALTH REAFFIRMED

In their analysis of post-war defence responsibility, February 1947, the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff emphasised the pre-eminence of Commonwealth defence ties.[5] While affirming that New Zealand remained committed to supporting the United Nations, this organisation had clearly not developed into "an effective world authority" and the possibility of its breakdown was recognised. The established collective security of the British Commonwealth was consequently stressed:

> The primary and most concrete association is the British Commonwealth of Nations. Our membership in this organisation is so fundamental a requirement that comment is scarcely needed. This security organisation is not a matter of theories and treaties, it has been in active operation for many years ... As long as the integrity of the Commonwealth is preserved, the integrity of New Zealand is itself under guarantee.[6]

It was further maintained that New Zealand was "committed to support the British Commonwealth" in wartime and that it received "protection in return".[7] The experience of 1941-42 showed the pitfalls of this theory, but it remained the most tangible defence arrangement.

While not envisaging any immediate threat of war, the Chiefs of Staff maintained that any future conflict was unlikely to be focused on the Pacific. Europe remained the centre of the world's balance of

---

[5] N.Z. COS Committee, 12 February 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

[6] Ibid., p.11.

[7] Ibid., pp.1-2.

power. Thus, the possibility of the Soviet Union's interests clashing with those of Britain and/or the United States could not be ruled out. In such a scenario, New Zealand would not be actively threatened compared to an enemy onslaught in Europe. The rationale therefore was:

> There must be no undue emphasis on the requirements of home defence, and organisation in peace-time must be directly related to probable overseas employment.[8]

New Zealand was expected to despatch its surplus forces for a joint Commonwealth offensive in the vital theatre of operations. This would involve contributing to a naval and air task force and the provision of an expeditionary force of an army division including an armoured brigade.[9] The latter (a nationally identifiable, tactically independent unit) remained New Zealand's major contribution to a Commonwealth war effort. However, mindful of changing strategic circumstances, particularly the fear of a resurgent Japan, New Zealand reserved the right to change its policies.

To carry out its defence commitment effectively, it was apparent that the New Zealand armed forces required a higher level of preparedness. In future conflicts, technological advances in weaponry and communications meant that timing and efficiency would be crucial; there would be no "phony war" to allow a gradual mobilisation. Instead, Commonwealth partners would need to take immediate action to confront an

---

[8] Ibid., p.21.

[9] Ibid., p.6.

aggressor; expeditionary forces would be required in the theatre of operations within three months.[10] The difficulty facing New Zealand was, therefore, how to achieve a potential war-footing in peacetime.

The Chiefs of Staff advocated a new training policy, relative to the needs of the respective services. For example, both the navy and air force largely comprised of specialist professional personnel, with 65-75% of regular forces maintained in peacetime.[11] They were thus able to be mobilised with reasonable efficiency. By contrast, the army was based on "unskilled" infantrymen, requiring only a skeletal permanent force. Therefore, to be able to provide a full expeditionary force in the exigency of a major war, the Chiefs of Staff concluded that some form of national service training was required. Only this system could provide the necessary store of trained manpower. The navy and air force would also benefit by obtaining reserves of unskilled and semi-skilled personnel.[12] However, peacetime conscription was a highly sensitive issue for the Labour government; and it was to take another two and a half years before any practical steps were taken here.

Given the advances in science and technology, the Chiefs of Staff also stressed the need for effective Commonwealth co-operation in defence research. Powerful new weapons were now in evidence: the atomic bomb,

---

[10] Ibid., p.21.

[11] Ibid., p.22.

[12] Ibid., p.23.

bacteriological weapons, rockets, advanced submarines and sonic aircraft.[13] While these weapons were not about to change basic military concepts, it was essential that Commonwealth defence remained technically advanced. Here was the concept of deterrence already in evidence. The first Commonwealth Conference on Defence Science had been held in London in November 1946 and an extensive programme of scientific research was being undertaken throughout the Commonwealth, in a deliberate dispersion of activity. The vast hinterlands of Canada and Australia were ideal locations for this development. It was hoped that New Zealand would participate in such projects by seconding scientific personnel overseas and by undertaking research projects appropriate to the country's needs and facilities.[14] It was also agreed to increase co-operation between the defence authorities and scientific institutions such as the D.S.I.R. and the universities. This resulted in the establishment of the Defence Science Advisory Committee, modelled on a similar organisation in Britain.[15]

New Zealand's role in wider Commonwealth strategy was highlighted by the visit of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lord Montgomery, in July 1947. This was a major occasion in the New Zealand calendar, and the huge crowds and civic receptions that greeted Montgomery throughout the country gave the appearance of a surrogate royal tour. However, a combination of

---

[13] Ibid., pp.2-3, 10.

[14] COS Paper, Defence Science, 26 July 1947,

of Montgomery's ascetic personal habits and a busy schedule meant that the full potential of the nation's hospitality was restrained.[16] New Zealand's British identity was manifestly displayed and Montgomery was apparently embarrassed by the depth of loyalty shown to the Mother Country. In his public statements, the Field Marshall stressed to his compliant audience the importance of Commonwealth solidarity:

> The biggest factor for peace is a strong and united British Empire. We must look to the British Commonwealth which, through strength, is able to enjoy peace and security and through its purpose and singleness of mind enjoys the respect of the world.[17]

However, Montgomery's tour was not just public relations and flag waving; extensive talks were also held with the government and Chiefs of Staff. These discussions on one hand noted the changes in post-war strategy - the increased regional responsibility of the Dominions and the need to rely on the United States. Yet Montgomery also emphasised the continuity of broader Commonwealth defence:

EA 81/4/3, pt.6; COS Paper, N.Z. Participation in Commonwealth Defence Science, 25 September 1947, EA 81/4/3, pt.6.

[15] Defence Science - Note of discussion at Army Headquarters 16 May 1947 EA 81/4/3, pt.6; COS Paper, N.Z. Participation in Commonwealth Defence Science, 25 September, ibid.

[16] EA 59/3/209, pt.1.

[17] Comments at State Luncheon, 17 July, quoted Dominion, 18 July 1947.

> Your preparation should be such as to enable you to deal with a threat whether it develops in the Pacific or in another vital theatre elsewhere.[18]

The essential condition here was that "the forces be handy and ready to go".[19] New Zealand was again expected to contribute troops to the main theatre of action, regardless of regional responsibility.

In peacetime, Montgomery recommended that New Zealand only required (and indeed could only afford) a territorial army, supported by a professional cadre, providing effective training. However, to maintain sufficient numbers and provide the necessary level of preparedness for an emergency, he advocated some form of national service. A possible model was Britain, where all 18 year old males were required to do 12 months national service, followed by 6 years in the territorials. In New Zealand's case, Montgomery stated that a minimum of 3 months compulsory training was required to support a reasonably efficient defence organisation.[20] Obviously, it was up to the government to decide what suited its own needs, and certainly, the requirements of industry warranted consideration. But in Montgomery's view, the maintenance of a voluntary force was a neglect of duty. This was an endorsement of the earlier views expressed by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.

Significantly, Montgomery did not identify a

---

[18] Cabinet discussion with Montgomery, 17 July 1947, EA 156/1/1, pt.2.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Cabinet discussion with Montgomery, 17 July 1947, EA 156/1/1, pt.2.

major potential enemy. Germany and Japan were conquered and occupied; and despite the Soviet Union's aggressive stance, wartime devastation meant that it lacked the industrial base to support a large scale war in the immediate future. However, in such an event, Montgomery defined British defence priorities as three-fold: ensuring the security of the United Kingdom; maintaining vital sea communications; and retaining a firm hold on the Middle East.[21] New Zealand was expected to fit into this scheme.

II. MOUNTING COLD WAR TENSIONS

By 1948 Soviet/Western relations had dramatically declined as the post-war division of Europe became polarised into two ideological/territorial blocs, with each side increasingly suspicious of the other's intentions. The establishment of Soviet client states in Eastern Europe, climaxed by the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, was perceived as graphic evidence of expansionism. Moscow was further seen as undermining Western interests by supporting insurrection in Asia and the Mediterranean. Cold war conflict was highlighted by the imposition of the Berlin blockade in July 1948 and the subsequent Western airlift. International peace had become precariously balanced; Fraser publicly lamented that "the world is not a bright and encouraging place at the moment".[22]

---

[21] Ibid.

[22] Statements and Documents, extract from P.M.'s Statement to House of Representatives, 28 February 1948, p.170.

The United Nations proved woefully ineffective in dealing with the deteriorating international climate. Despite progress in social and economic activities, Fraser admitted that "unfortunately, its failures loom much larger and are ... more serious than its successes".[23] The blame was laid with Soviet aggression and intransigence. While Wellington maintained a commitment to the United Nations' principles, there appeared no likelihood of achieving an effective system of universal collective security. New Zealand, instead, had to rely on the established defence ties of the Commonwealth and ultimately, the wider Western alliance. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter guaranteed the right to such collective defence measures. Contributing to a possible war with the Soviet Union thus became New Zealand's defence rationale. Such a strategy would have been an anathema to Wellington and Canberra in 1946, but subsequent events had countered initial idealism. Certainly, the legacy of pre-war appeasement convinced the New Zealand government that a hard line was needed. As Fraser stated: "this is not Munich, this is not a sounding of retreat in the face of any dictatorship plans".[24]

As the Cold War deepened and the United Nations floundered, New Zealand consciously reaffirmed Commonwealth defence ties. Solidarity with Britain was aptly

---

[23] Ibid., p.171.

[24] Statements and Documents, 28 February 1948, p.174.

illustrated during the Berlin crisis, July 1948 to May 1949. In response to the Soviet blockade, New Zealand lent three Dakota air crews to serve with the Royal Air Force in the relief of the besieged city.[25] By firmly pledging support for Britain's policy here, New Zealand clearly renewed the traditional imperial commitment. The boundary of the nation's security manifestly remained in Europe.

A further Prime Ministers' Meeting was scheduled for 1948 and this served to re-emphasise New Zealand's commitment to Commonwealth defence. The National opposition was quick to accuse the government of past neglect of the Commonwealth in favour of the discredited United Nations. Doidge espoused the traditional imperialist line:

> For three years Empire statesmen have been attending one international conference after another. I submit that our crying need has been for Empire conferences. We have concentrated on the patching up of the crazy pavements of the new world edifice whilst our own great Empire threatens to disintegrate.[26]

The Commonwealth meeting, Doidge maintained, should aim to formalise defence solidarity.

In their advice to the government prior to the Prime Ministers' Meeting, the Chiefs of Staff also affirmed the importance of collective Commonwealth defence; restating their 1947 thesis with a heightened urgency. In the event of war, New Zealand would inevitably help Britain by concentrating its military effort in the

---

[25] N.Z. Cabinet Meeting, 3 September 1948, CAB 1/1/1-1/7/1.

[26] NZPD, 8 September 1948, Vol. 282, p.2126.

decisive theatre of operations. The nation's security was thus given the broadest basis:

> any suggestion that ... the action we would be prepared to take in time of war should be restricted to a defined geographical region has the most dangerous implications.[27]

New Zealand's defence remained within a Commonwealth-wide context.

However, the demands of modern warfare required effective defence preparation in peacetime. To achieve this, the Chiefs of Staff advocated co-ordinated planning between Commonwealth members, thereby ensuring concerted action in event of an emergency. Certainly, the Commonwealth war effort in World War II would have been more effective if a definite system of defence co-operation had been in prior existence.[28] New Zealand had hoped that the exchange of joint service liaison staffs (following the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting) would foster this co-operation. But the Commonwealth was a free association not a military alliance and some members refused to compromise their sovereignty by agreeing to integrated planning. Liaison staffs were thus mainly limited to the role of exchanging information.[29]

Sovereignty, rather than solidarity, was the prevailing feature of the post-war Commonwealth. While Wellington reaffirmed a commitment to the concept of imperial defence, this was the government's individual

---

[27] COS (48) Arrangements for World Security and the Position of New Zealand, 24 September 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

choice, reflecting the continuing dependence on Britain. Canada and South Africa, by contrast, were less dependent and would not accept their sovereignty being compromised by "promise and commitment".[30] In the past, an informal understanding had united the Commonwealth in emergencies, but there was no guarantee that this would continue. There was consequent concern in Wellington that the Commonwealth was dividing rather than uniting.[31] The addition of three Asian members and the election of a Nationalist government in Pretoria was seen to further weaken the vestiges of defence solidarity. New Zealand thus noted with regret that Britain and its neighbours in Western Europe had formalised concrete defence arrangements that the Commonwealth had been unable to achieve, notwithstanding special ties. New Zealand hoped that the Commonwealth could achieve a similar arrangement.[32]

On the eve of his departure for the London meeting, Fraser delivered an ardently pro-Commonwealth speech:

> Our countries are free and independent and sovereign, but ... without our Mother Country and without the strength that unity means among our countries our sovereignty would count for little.[33]

The United Nations, he admitted, had not achieved initial expectations and while scheduled to attend the

---

[30] Canadian High Commissioner to Fraser, 30 June 1948, EA 153/26/1, pt.1.

[31] Emphasised by McIntosh in letter to Canadian High Commissioner, 23 August 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[32] McIntosh to Canadian High Commissioner, 23 August 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1; COS(48) Arrangements for World Security, op.cit. EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[33] NZPD, 28 September 1948, Vol. 283, p.2592.

General Assembly in Paris he was sceptical that positive results would be achieved. The time for idealism was clearly over and Fraser invoked the language of the Cold War, attacking the "dark, turgid, dangerous flood"[34] of Communism, seen to be emanating from Moscow. It was essential, he declared, that the Commonwealth take a firm stand against Soviet aggression in Europe:

> The Western nations of Europe are threatened ... among the Western nations is the United Kingdom ... the centre, focus and force of the British Commonwealth of Nations ... New Zealand, as previously, is in the position where her frontiers are the frontiers of the British Commonwealth. The frontiers of the British Commonwealth are the frontiers of democracy.[35]

Here was the traditional doctrine of imperial defence, not far removed from Massey's time. However, it remained to be seen if the other Commonwealth members would endorse this commitment.

In accordance with the constitutional structure of the Commonwealth and in continuity with its 1946 predecessor, the 1948 Prime Ministers' Meeting (10-22 October) was not a policy-making summit. It was, rather, an informal consultation, involving a free exchange of views. Certainly, with the presence of three new Asian members, the image of a free association of sovereign nations was accentuated, rather than New Zealand's continued perception of an imperial family. The meeting's chairman, Clement Attlee, readily agreed that it was incongruous to talk of a "Commonwealth

---

[34] Ibid., p.2599.

[35] NZPD, 28 September 1948, Vol. 283, p.2599.

view"; it was rather a matter of fully appreciating the individual policies of Canada, India or New Zealand. Further, it was proposed that there should be more emphasis on matters involving particular dominions - a regional focus - rather than the traditional broad inter-Commonwealth approach.[36]

New Zealand did not accept such views. Fraser had earlier written to Chifley expressing his concern that the Commonwealth appeared to be "drifting apart" on "matters of vital importance".[37] Consequently, Fraser told the meeting that his government was vitally concerned with developments in Europe and would oppose any moves confining consultation to countries from a particular region. The Commonwealth, he maintained, should be striving to achieve a common defence policy, and suggested a re-examination of John Curtin's 1944 proposals for the creation of a Commonwealth Secretariat.[38] The advocacy of permanent machinery and defence commitments was not a diminution of New Zealand's independence, but the result of inherent interdependence, heightened by the unstable international situation. Unlike Canada's North American destiny, South Africa's aspiring Afrikaner nationalism or India's newly found independence, New Zealand's identity and security remained externally focused, centred on a united British Commonwealth.

---

[36] PMM(48) Minutes of 7th meeting, 18 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[37] Fraser to Chifley, 27 May 1948, EA 153/26/1, pt.1.

[38] PMM(48) Minutes of 4th meeting, 12 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

In contrast to the international optimism of the 1946 meeting (where Australia and New Zealand criticised the anti-Soviet views of the British government), there was a general Cold War consensus regarding the apparent Soviet threat. Fraser reflected the feelings of most leaders by asserting "that under Russian inspiration Communism was becoming synonymous with aggression".[39] However, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin pointed out that Moscow wanted to achieve its ends "by all means short of war".[40] This primarily involved supporting insurrection in underdeveloped countries. It was, therefore, agreed that positive social and economic policies (following the example of the post-war rehabilitation of Western Europe) were the most appropriate methods of combating the spread of Communism.[41]

The British authorities still maintained that the Soviet Union was unlikely to provoke war in the immediate future, particularly as it lacked sufficient economic infrastructure, airpower or atomic weapons. But effective defence planning was essential; in the event of armed conflict, the Soviet Union's vast military forces would have immediate numerical advantage and could threaten to overrun much of Europe and the Middle East. The armed forces, therefore, had to be in a position to be able to strike back "hard and immediately".[42] Despite advances in technology, the

---

[39] Ibid.

[40] PMM(48) Minutes of 3rd meeting, 12 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[41] PMM(48) Minutes of 3rd and 4th meetings, 12 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff disregarded the possibility of a "push button war"; established military strategies would remain. In the event of war, Britain's defence priorities were spelt out: the immediate defence of the British Isles; a strategic offensive in Europe; the maintenance of communications with the Commonwealth and the United States; and the defence of the Middle East.[43] Here was a strategy that New Zealand easily endorsed. Though, clearly, this could not be achieved in a solely Commonwealth context; the active support of Western Europe and particularly, the United States was essential.

While the special defence responsibilities of individual Commonwealth nations was recognised, the British Chiefs of Staff emphasised that effective defence preparation required close co-operation and consultation. If governments would agree to co-ordinate their respective strategies and unite on general principles and objectives, the security of members would be greatly strengthened. It was thus hoped that a greater utilisation of the joint service liaison system would allow military staffs the opportunity to co-operate more extensively on a planning level - subject to the approval of respective governments.[44]

Fraser gave strong support to Britain's proposals,

---

[42] Lord Tedder, PMM(48) Minutes of 11th meeting, 20 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[43] U.K. COS 'Commonwealth Defence Co-operation', 23 September 1948, EA 153/26/1, pt.1.

[44] PMM(48), U.K. Government memo 'The World Situation and its Defence Aspects'; U.K. COS memo, 'Commonwealth Defence Co-operation', 23 September 1948, EA 153/26/1, pt.2; PMM(48) Minutes of 11th meeting, 20 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

but in contrast to the Canadian or South African delegations, his emphasis was on unitary Commonwealth defence rather than a regional division of responsibility.[45] While acknowledging New Zealand's vested interest in Pacific security, he maintained that this was not an area of strategic priority. In any case, regional concentration was seen as counter productive as no country - given technological advances in warfare - could stand in isolation. Fraser thus asserted that Commonwealth governments should pool their defence plans and even asked the British authorities to recommend how New Zealand could best contribute to a joint war effort.[46] Here was a stance in continuity with the ardent imperialism of earlier conservative governments.

Defence co-operation was, of course, part of wider inter-Commonwealth consultation, including foreign and economic matters. As sovereign nations, members were free to consult and co-operate, but there could be no compulsory obligations and standing machinery was unacceptable (though not to New Zealand). The Prime Ministers did, however, agree to submit proposals to their governments formalising the accepted methods of consultation - more frequent Ministerial meetings and a greater exchange of information. At Fraser's suggestion, a paragraph on defence was included:

> In furtherance of the general aim of co-operation between all peace-loving nations to deter and resist aggression there will be close consultation between Commonwealth governments to arrange co-operative action in matters of defence, including those matters which arise from a common interest in a particular region. The military advisers of those governments will consult

---

[45] McIntosh informed Shanahan that New Zealand was

> together to frame proposals and plans for submission to their respective governments.[47]

It was up to individual Dominions to decide the degree of co-operation desired. In New Zealand's case, extensive planning did develop, both regionally - culminating in the ANZAM arrangement - and from a wider imperial commitment.

New Zealand's continued commitment to collective Commonwealth defence was highlighted at the brief Prime Ministers' Meeting in April 1949. While forced to accept India's repudiation of common allegiance, Fraser wanted an assurance that member nations would continue to provide mutual assistance in wartime.[48] In Fraser's view this was the essential test of the Commonwealth's viability:

> it was the essence of the Commonwealth that its members should desire to help one another, whether in peace or war.[49]

Nehru was quick to repudiate this narrow interpretation of the responsibilities of membership.[50] Certainly, since the Chanak Crisis of 1923, the independence of members' defence policies was apparent. But New Zealand's dependence on Britain, coupled with the cold war, saw Wellington unilaterally invoke a revised imperial strategy.

This policy was illustrated with regard to Hong Kong in 1949. In the wake of the Communist victory

---

the only Dominion not stressing regionalism "first, foremost and last", 23 October 1948, EA 156/1/1, pt.2.

[46] PMM(48) Minutes of 11th meeting, 20 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[47] PMM(48) Annex Commonwealth Consultation, 21 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[48] PMM(49) Minutes of 3rd meeting, 25 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

in the Chinese Civil War, the security of the Crown Colony was potentially at risk. Peking was primarily pre-occupied with the immense problems of consolidation and reconstruction, but a weakened Britain and the lack of geographical barriers left Hong Kong open to attack or, at least, subversion. In fact, the British government seriously considered abandoning the colony.[51] London, however, finally resolved to stand firm, canvassing support from its Commonwealth partners. The New Zealand Cabinet discussed the matter on 10 June 1949. Fraser recognised some legitimacy in China's claim to the territory, but it was agreed that any British capitulation would be a very dangerous precedent, particularly in the face of developments in South-East Asia.[52] New Zealand subsequently provided three Dakota aircraft and 57 personnel to help the R.A.F. carry supplies from Singapore to Hong Kong. Three frigates were also made available, if required.[53]

The Prime Ministers' Meetings of 1948 and 1949 were particularly valuable in giving New Zealand the opportunity to consult with British defence authorities on the most effective contribution to a future Commonwealth war effort. In the event of war, the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff recommended New Zealand's surplus military resources be concentrated in the vital

---

[49] PMM(49) Minutes of 6th meeting, 25 April 1949, EA 153/27/4, pt.1.

[50] Ibid.

[51] P. Darby, British Defence Policy - East of Suez 1947-1968 (London, 1973), p.18.

[52] Cabinet Meeting, 10 June 1949, CAB 1/1/1-1/7/1.

[53] NZPD, 18 August 1949, Vol. 286, p.1381.

strategic theatre,[54] thereby endorsing the earlier views of their New Zealand counterparts. Obviously, wartime contingencies would determine the extent of this imperial contribution , but the apparent security of the Pacific indicated that the focus of New Zealand's military action would not be regional. The British highlighted the crucial strategic importance of the Middle East - the focal point for inter-Commonwealth communication, a region with important British bases, a buffer for Africa and Asia, and a major source of oil reserves - and suggested New Zealand would most effectively contribute to Commonwealth defence here. However, in terms of New Zealand's vital trade routes, most of the nation's trade went via Panama rather than Suez;[55] New Zealand would be defending imperial, rather than national interests. But the Middle East had provided the focus of New Zealand's military action in two world wars and was seen as the most appropriate location for future wartime activity.

Wellington agreed that in the event of war it would despatch to the Middle East an expeditionary force of one infantry division, including an armoured brigade, as well as a tactical air force contingent and surplus naval vessels.[56] The provision of a large proportion of the air force was a significant departure from earlier plans which had restricted its role to Pacific defence -

---

[54]Council of Defence (49)2, A Statement of the Problems Confronting the Army in Event of an Emergency, 26 February 1949, EA 81/14/5, pt.1.

[55]MacGibbon,'The Defence of New Zealand', p.154.

[56]CD(49)2, A Statement of the Problems

evidence of the pervasiveness of imperial security. Time was the essential factor in achieving this commitment. The British authorities stressed that in the face of a Soviet onslaught, troops would be required for action as soon as possible - there would be no breathing space for a "phony war". It was, therefore, requested that the expeditionary force of some 25,000 should complete formative training and embark by "D + 50" and be ready for operation by "D + 90".[57] This contrasted with the 18 months required after the declaration of war in 1939, before the 2 NZEF was ready for active service, and even then insufficient training produced heavy casualties.

Since 1947 the established consensus in defence circles was that military obligations could only be achieved by some form of national service. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and Lord Montgomery had both expressed this opinion. In turn, the Minister of Defence, Fred Jones, had told parliament on 14 July 1948 that he believed a degree of compulsion was required to provide an adequate territorial force, let alone an expeditionary one.[58] There was strong support for such a policy from influential groups like the R.S.A. and the New Zealand Defence League. Major-General Howard Kippenberger, President of the R.S.A. and war hero, played a prominent role here. By March 1949, the R.S.A.-backed Joint Defence Action Committee launched a newspaper campaign pressing for compulsory military service.[59]

Confronting the Army in Event of an Emergency, 26 February 1949, EA 81/14/5, pt.1.

The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff strongly advocated a national service programme as the only satisfactory method of providing the requisite expeditionary force within the prescribed time limit. This was a particularly urgent need as the territorial system had not been revived after the war, putting the army in a worse position for mobilisation than in 1914 or 1939. Continuing with voluntary enlistment in peacetime was thus a luxury New Zealand could not afford. Upon the outbreak of war, such a system would require 15 months to train an expeditionary force, and given the heavy casualties received by 2 NZEF during its first engagements in 1941, this period was insufficient. Even with the immediate introduction of national service for 18 year olds, an expeditionary force of fully trained reservists would take six years to achieve.[60] New Zealand clearly had to hope that war was not a short term prospect.

National service in peacetime was a very controversial and sensitive matter for the Labour government. It contravened traditional party principles[61] and was potentially divisive, requiring a cautious approach, particularly in an election year. Fraser

---

[57] Ibid.

[58] NZPD, 14 July 1948, Vol. 280, p.605.

[59] W.R. McLennan,'The Last Years of the First Labour Government 1945-49' (M.A. Thesis, University of Auckland) 1963, p.255.

[60] A Statement of the Problems Confronting the Army in the Event of an Emergency. Army H.Q., 26 February 1949, EA 81/14/5, pt.1.

[61] For example, the 1919 Labour Party Conference resolved to abolish all military training. McIntyre and Gardner, pp.355-356.

alluded to the government's problem when addressing the National Council of the Federation of Labour in February 1949 but was non-commital.[62] Faced with a political quandary, the government subsequently appointed a special Caucus Committee to examine the whole question of New Zealand's defence responsibilities and to advise on the most appropriate action.

At the committee's first meeting, 29 March 1949, Fraser reminded the members of Labour's resolution on taking office in 1935, that they would: "Consider the situation and take what steps were necessary for the defence of the country".[63] Fraser personally saw no alternative to compulsory military service. This was not, he stressed, an invocation of militarism, but a necessary contribution to the Commonwealth and therefore, New Zealand's security. However, he was also very conscious that this was a major political issue, in which the needs of the country, the government and the Labour Party all required consideration.[64] The government was in a dilemma; on one hand, there was the threat of dividing the party in election year; while, alternatively, the opposition was likely to gain political capital if no action was taken.

Most of the committee supported the Prime Minister's lead. Nash proposed that national service should be promoted as a civic duty on the Swiss model, thereby hoping to placate the trade unions. Phillip

---

[62] Round Table, June 1949 Vol. 39, No. 155, p.293.

[63] Caucus Committee on Defence, Minutes of first meeting, 29 March 1949, EA 81/24/3, pt.1.

[64] Caucus Committee on Defence, Minutes of third

Connolly noted that it was only right for New Zealand to increase its defence commitment, as the nation's present per capita expenditure of £7.4 compared unfavourably with Britain's £15.2 or Canada's £12.14. However, not all members were compliant. Angus McLagan maintained that there was insufficient threat to warrant national service; Germany and Japan were non-contenders and the Soviet Union seemed to prefer the methods of propaganda and subversion. Concern was also expressed about the political repercussions with many traditional Labour voters and of the effects on industry.[65]

The final report of the Caucus Committee reiterated that New Zealand's most appropriate and useful contribution to Commonwealth defence was despatching an expeditionary force to the vital theatre. To meet the required establishments involved here, the committee concluded that the following annual intake was necessary:

Regular Forces	
Navy	350
Army	500
Air Force	500
	1,350

Non-Regular Forces	
Navy	280
Army	7,200
Air Force	500
	7,980

[66]

meeting, 13 May 1949, EA 81/24/3, pt.1.

[65]Caucus Committee on Defence, Minutes of third meeting, 13 May 1949, EA 81/24/3, pt.1.

[66]Caucus Committee on Defence Report, 25 May 1949, EA 81/24/1, pt.1.

Clearly, the more professional navy and air force were relatively self-sufficient compared to the large manpower requirements of the army. Given the logistics involved, the existing voluntary system was deemed futile; national service was thus the only effective method available. The committee refuted the traditional contention of "no conscription in peacetime":

> The peculiar theory that its introduction must necessarily be delayed until the outbreak of hostilities arises from an inadequate appreciation of the conditions today, the result of which might well prove to be suicidal ... The conditions that are likely to arise immediately upon the outbreak of any major war in the future and the substantial period now required to train men ... make it essential, if we are to meet our responsibilities, that the force be organised and substantially trained in peace time.

The committee noted that existing legislation (the 1909 Defence Act and Emergency Regulations) provided for compulsory military training, but concluded that a new Act was more appropriate.[67]

Armed with cabinet and caucus approval,[68] Fraser presented the government's policy for endorsement at the Labour Party's National Conference in May 1949. In attempting to make the proposal palatable, Fraser stressed the menace of the Soviet Union and the need to defend New Zealand by defending the British Commonwealth - "with which the destiny of New Zealand is wholly and completely bound up".[69] New Zealand, he argued, needed to take this step to ensure its own

---

[67] Caucus Committee on Defence Report, 25 May 1949, EA 81/24/1, pt.1.

[68] Cabinet Meeting, 20 May 1949, CAB 1/1/1-1/1/7.

[69] N.Z. Labour Party, Report of 33rd Annual Conference 1949, McIntyre and Gardner, p.425.

security:

> We must be ready to defend the country. I must have my answer ... we will literally be criminals if we do not take every step to protect our shores.[70]

A large portion of the party rank and file were not easily won over by this Prime Ministerial rhetoric. In fact, by the opening of the conference, some 16 Trade Councils were openly expressing their opposition to the prospects of conscription.[71] While the floor accepted resolutions regarding the effective defence of New Zealand and the Commonwealth, there was considerable opposition to the provision calling for compulsory national service, if the government saw such a measure as essential. Here was a betrayal of one of the basic tenets of Labour philosophy. An amendment was subsequently proposed re-stating the party's "opposition to conscription in peace; and in war reasserts its support for equal conscription of wealth and manpower".[72] To avoid an embarrassing impasse, Fraser produced a compromise amendment requesting that the government:

> use all resources of the country essential for the defence and preservation of our people, our country and our Commonwealth and that if the resources are not available without compulsory National Service, the Government be requested to obtain the views of the electors on the question by a referendum.[73]

This was a significant concession as the government

---

[70] Quoted Round Table September 1949, Vol. 39, No. 156, p.388.

[71] McLennan, p.255.

[72] McIntyre and Gardner, p.425.

[73] McIntyre and Gardner, p.425.

had originally proposed to use conscription as an election platform, rather than making it the subject of a special referendum - the dangerous consequences of which had been discussed.[74]

Official policy was finally announced in the Speech from the Throne, June 1949. The Governor-General declared that national service was the only effective means of providing the required troops for an emergency and that legislation providing for a referendum on the issue would be introduced. In response, the opposition strongly attacked the government, accusing it of vacillating and becoming a captive of its left wing. Here was an administration, Holland claimed, who were long aware of its responsibilities, but had failed to take any positive action.[75] Some Labour backbenchers also expressed misgivings. For example, Frank Langstone (Roskill) argued that advancing technology threatened to make large expeditionary forces an anachronism and that the most suitable form of defence was a large air force with superior striking power.[76] Such comments reflected growing divisions in the party.

The government subsequently mounted a large scale campaign for the referendum. As feared, national service did alienate many traditional Labour supporters as well as members of the intelligentsia. Fraser's

---

[74] Caucus Committee on Defence, 6th meeting, 19 May 1949, EA 81/24/3, pt.1; Cabinet Meeting, 20 May 1949, CAB 1/1/1-1/1/7.

[75] NZPD, 29 June 1949, Vol. 285, pp.33-35.

[76] NZPD, 30 June 1949, Vol. 285, p.83.

On Guard . . . for

PEACE

★ In a tense world and with the basis for lasting peace still eluding the United Nations we must be prepared. Strength discourages would-be aggressors.

★ To be prepared is to guard the peace — it does not mean war-mindedness.

★ Sound training in modern defence methods gives our men better protection if they ever have to bear arms.

★ The compulsory system is the only fair way . . . the voluntary system has failed in the past.

★ The compulsory system is the only efficient way. Efficient defence is essential in the interests of everybody — it is to protect all that they hold dear.

★ This question must be given your most earnest consideration and then, by your striking out the bottom line, given the most overwhelming vote in the cause of security and, consequently, of peace.

COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING

is the ONLY fair way!

STRIKE OUT THE BOTTOM LINE

I vote FOR compulsory military training

~~I vote AGAINST compulsory military training~~

ISSUED BY THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT

public meetings were disrupted by angry protestors and pamphlets were distributed highlighting the irony of Fraser's imprisonment in 1916 for opposing the war effort.[77] The results of the poll, held 3 August, strongly endorsed national service (534,031 to 160,998),[78] but it was significant that, despite the campaign's high profile and the Prime Minister's emphasis that it was a "life and death matter",[79] 40% of the electorate stayed away. Certainly, the accompanying controversy dealt a hard blow to Labour; the government managed to rile both the left and the right. The National Party and its supporters saw the plebiscite as a show of weakness and a waste of time and money.[80] In turn, many trade unionists and party activists saw the government betraying a basic Labour precept. However, the conscription issue was more a symptom than the cause of Labour's subsequent defeat in the general election - a focus for disillusionment with a long serving government.

A lot of criticism has been levelled at Fraser over the reintroduction of compulsory military training - the 1916 anti-war protestor turned Cold War crusader. However, the political reality of the government's position has to be realised. The Soviet Union's policies were perceived as threatening, requiring effective

---

[77] Thorn, p.269.

[78] MacGibbon, 'Defence of New Zealand 1945-57', p.156.

[79] NZPD, 8 September 1949, Vol. 287, p.2221.

[80] The opposition resoundly criticised the spending of £100,000 of public money when the government could have taken immediate legislative action. NZPD, 8 September 1949 Vol. 287, p.1768.

countermeasures. Labour had witnessed the futility of pre-war appeasement and now saw the United Nations following in the impotent footsteps of its predecessor. It was, therefore, seen as essential to contribute to the proven arrangement of Commonwealth collective security (even if other member nations did not accept this commitment); and national service was deemed the only effective method of doing so. This decision was not taken lightly, evidenced by the long period of investigation - even indecision - and the government was very conscious of the political complications involved. Nevertheless, the ongoing commitment to the British Commonwealth was decisive.

III. THE WESTERN UNION

While some Commonwealth members remained unwilling to compromise their sovereignty by formalising defence arrangements, the establishment of the Western Union saw Britain and its European neighbours forge extensive defence ties. The Brussels Pact, 17 March 1947, linked the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux nations in a treaty of mutual assistance. Permanent defence machinery was subsequently created: a military planning staff, secretariat, military supply board and committee of Defence Ministers. Negotiations were also proceeding to further underwrite the security of Western Europe by a North Atlantic Treaty, involving the United States and Canada. Such institutional arrangements were a considerable advance from the Commonwealth's

exchange of joint service liaison officers. New Zealand regretted that foreign nations could achieve a degree of military co-operation with Britain, that Commonwealth members were unable to, despite special ties.[81]

Wellington welcomed moves to consolidate the security of Western Europe, but the implications of Britain's membership of the Western Union required serious consideration. In the Speech from the Throne, 22 June 1948, the government expressed its hope that "a closer economic, defensive, and spiritual union" in Europe would not affect "the historic unity" of the British Commonwealth.[82] There was some concern that Britain would now be even less involved in the Pacific, and would become excessively pre-occupied with European rather than wider imperial interests:

> We look with no enthusiasm on the substitution of another group for the Commonwealth, and we see a positive danger to our own security if some members of the Commonwealth should concentrate too closely upon one region, namely, Western Europe and the Atlantic.[83]

There was also recognition that New Zealand would be increasingly tied to a wider Western European commitment, given the established obligations to Britain.[84]

London kept in close consultation with its Commonwealth partners over developments in Europe.

---

[81] McIntosh to Canadian High Commissioner, 23 August 1948, EA 153/26/5, pt.1.

[82] NZPD, 22 June 1948, Vol. 280, p.2.

[83] McIntosh to Canadian High Commissioner, 23 August 1948, op. cit; Joint Planning Council; Arrangements for Security, 17 September 1948, EA 156/1/1, pt.2.

[84] Foss Shanahan, Defence Questions, 9 September 1948, EA 156/1/1, pt.2.

Attlee strongly refuted opposition claims that the Dominions were being abandoned in favour of foreigners :

> While I want to get as close as we can with the other nations, we have to bear in mind that we are not solely a European power but a member of a great Commonwealth and Empire ...[85]

At the 1948 Prime Ministers' Meeting the Commonwealth leaders endorsed the Western Union as a regional association in accordance with the United Nations Charter.[86] Bevin emphasised that it was not a defence bloc working at the expense of the Commonwealth, but "rather an association of nations on the lines of the Commonwealth".[87] Nevertheless, the Western Union went considerably further in terms of defence co-operation than the Commonwealth. European defence was advanced again with the formal conclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949, confirming the precedence of the wider Western Alliance, centred on the power of the United States.

In the post-war context it was manifestly anachronistic to speak in terms of a Commonwealth defence strategy. Member nations were free to determine their own defence policies and were not bound by any formal obligations. But, given a very real economic and emotional dependence on the United Kingdom, coupled with Cold War conflict, New Zealand chose to reaffirm

---

[85] House of Commons, 5 May 1948, Mansergh, Documents II, p.1133.

[86] PMM(48) Final Communique, 22 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

[87] PMM(48) Minutes of 10th meeting, 19 October 1948, EA 153/26/4, pt.1.

its traditional commitment to collective Commonwealth security. The nation's first line of defence remained wherever British interests were threatened - evidently in Europe rather than the Pacific. New Zealand consequently, tightened its commitment to "imperial strategy", highlighted by the reintroduction of compulsory military training. In doing so, New Zealand was ultimately contributing to wider Western defence, though this was expressed in traditional Commonwealth terms.

CONCLUSION

> Some great achievements have been made in the matter of holding the British Commonwealth of Nations together. There has been a certain amount of give and take and a good deal of elasticity, but the cement that binds seems to be sufficient ... It is largely a matter of sentiment and of mutual benefit, but in spite of all the stresses and strains, that great precursor of any successful United Nations establishment, the British Commonwealth of Nations, still carries on.
>
> - Rev. C. Carr, NZPD, 5 July 1949 Vol. 285, p.206.

By the time of the defeat of the first Labour government in 1949, New Zealand's sovereign status was manifest. The Statute of Westminster had been finally adopted, an indigenous citizenship created, a greater participation in the international community achieved, and an increased role in Pacific affairs sought. Such achievements were seen as New Zealand's rightful due, as Peter Fraser asserted in November 1947:

> The nationhood of our country is accepted in common with that of every other British Dominion, and we expect as our natural right and function to be represented independently and to express opinions... It is beyond argument that that is a right of our country.[1]

At the United Nations and the numerous economic and political conferences that dominated the post-war years, New Zealand enunciated its own policies, with its political leaders playing an active international role. Clearly, New Zealand had its own place to maintain in the world.

---

[1] NZPD, 7 November 1947, Vol. 279, p.532.

However, independence was not seen as an end in itself. The New Zealand government strongly advocated the cause of greater international co-operation, as illustrated by the established ties of the British Commonwealth. Fraser had endorsed the Commonwealth as a model in microcosm for the newly established United Nations in 1945:

> We British peoples have learnt that, as well as being independent, we are interdependent ... the future of the world depends upon our recognition of the interdependence of all nations, and upon the co-operation of one nation with another ... That recognition ... is even greater than a nation realising its own genius and wanting to break away from its existing association and claiming independence.[2]

New Zealand's independence was, therefore, supplemented by an inherent commitment to the Commonwealth. This was primarily the traditional bi-lateral relationship with the Mother Country, though other ties emerged in the post-war environment, notably increasing regional co-operation with Australia.

Commonwealth membership was thus a fundamental paradox: the juncture of autonomy and unity. New Zealand saw this as the ideal balance. There were, however, tensions between the roles of independent small state and loyal Dominion. By 1949, any such balance had markedly tipped in the Commonwealth's favour, with traditional ties of trade, defence, constitutionalism and sentiment reaffirmed and even strengthened. This was aptly symbolised by the election

---

[2]Statement by Fraser as Chairman of the Trusteeship Committee of the San Francisco Conference June 1945. Statements and Documents, p.93.

in 1949 of a new National government, headed by a New Zealand born Prime Minister far more adamantly "imperialistic" than his British born Labour predecessor.

In economic terms, New Zealand remained inextricably bound to Britain, its major trading partner and the banker of its international currency reserves. Post-war exigencies saw the continuity of bulk purchasing, whereby New Zealand sent its surplus meat and dairy products to Britain at below market prices. In turn, New Zealand agreed to restrict imports and limit consumption to help maintain Sterling Area reserves. There was some conflict here with New Zealand's own immediate interests, but the rationale was that New Zealand was helping itself by helping Britain's economic recovery. However, this served to reinforce a colonial economy and economic dependency. Professor Beaglehole's comments of 1938 still applied: "New Zealand, in fact, psychologically has remained a colony because economically it has remained a colony."[3]

In terms of defence, Commonwealth ties remained pre-eminent. The post-war period confirmed Britain's inability to exercise a major role in the Pacific, but New Zealand and Australia attempted to counter this by increased regional co-operation. The Canberra Pact provided an extensive (if over ambitious)

---

[3] J.C. Beaglehole, 'New Zealand in the Commonwealth: An Attempt at Objectivity', Contemporary New Zealand, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs (Wellington, 1938), p.3.

basis for a "regional sphere of British influence" and was followed by such developments as the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia and ANZAM. However, without the participation of the undisputed Pacific power, the United States, such arrangements were necessarily limited in scope. But Washington was not prepared to enter into any security arrangements with the Pacific Dominions, thereby ensuring the continued primacy of Commonwealth regional defence. On a wider scale, the Labour government's initial hopes for an effective system of universal collective security, under the aegis of the United Nations, were dashed as the divisions of the Cold War became entrenched. Initial international idealism was thus replaced by a re-emphasis on traditional imperial defence. This was dramatically highlighted by the re-introduction of compulsory military training in 1949, thereby ensuring that New Zealand could effectively contribute to the defence of British interests in the Middle East. This commitment was maintained until 1955. Here, then, was the traditional notion that New Zealand's first line of defence was wherever the Empire was threatened - in direct continuity with the policies of past conservative governments.

In constitutional terms, New Zealand's independence was still expressed as part of a wider Commonwealth identity. The British monarch was the

head of state and loyalty to the Crown was pronounced. New Zealanders saw themselves as a "British" people (in its broadest sense) and referred to the United Kingdom as "home". As Fraser expressed in 1947: "We are people of the same race, or have been merged into the one British."[4] This did not demean New Zealand's sovereignty, but reflected important mythical and emotional bonds. Consequently, while the adoption of the Statute of Westminster and the establishment of a New Zealand citizenship confirmed independence, they primarily served to reinforce Commonwealth unity rather than a distinct national identity.

New Zealand's devotion to the Commonwealth was particularly illustrated by its conservative approach to Asian membership. The government welcomed a resolve to the protracted issue of Indian independence, but adamantly opposed any perceived weakening of an effective Commonwealth united by common allegiance to the Crown and mutual support in war and peace. The Indian government's policies of republicanism and non-alignment thus contradicted Wellington's view of the Commonwealth. The implicit basis of the Commonwealth was, however, a free association of sovereign nations; while New Zealand was free to define its Commonwealth relationship in definite commitments, other members did not, as Canada and South Africa had long showed. India's continued membership as a

---

[4] NZPD, 7 November 1947, Vol. 279, p.534.

republic was ultimately accepted but on the condition that New Zealand's status was unaffected.

By emphasising traditional Commonwealth ties New Zealand, in fact, chose to downplay significant post-war changes. The Commonwealth was not, by its very nature, a united bloc, and was even less so in the new international environment. Individual sovereignty, coupled with a weakened Britain, ensured that the Commonwealth could not be compared to the military and economic might of the United States and the Soviet Union. Commonwealth members had, in fact, become in practice part of the wider Western alliance based on American power. This is not to suggest New Zealand was blind to international reality; Wellington's desire to forge a regional defence agreement with Washington and to increase exports to the Dollar Area reflected realistic perceptions. However, established emotional and material bonds to Britain - continued security in a changing world - meant that New Zealand remained the bastion of the "Old Commonwealth" in a new age.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY

1. UNPUBLISHED

(A) Official Papers - National Archives, Wellington

CAB 1/1/1-1/1/7	Cabinet Papers 1948-49.
EA 56/1/3, pt. 1A	New Zealand's interest in the Pacific 1944-47.
EA 56/2/2, pt. 1	External Affairs Committee, notice of meetings 1947-56.
EA 56/2/5, pt. 1-4	External Affairs Committee, Master set of documents and papers 1947-51.
EA 58/1/1, pt. 1A	U.K. Foreign Policy.
EA 58/2/2/1, pt. 2-3	Trade with U.K.
EA 58/2/2/4, pt. 1	Trade with U.K.
EA 58/2/2/9, pt. 1	Trade, Primary Products.
EA 58/207/1, pt. 1A	External Relations, Ireland.
EA 59/2/102, pt. 1	New Zealand delegation to Commonwealth Conference on Japanese Peace Settlement, Canberra, 1947.
EA 59/2/143, pt. 1	Nash and party to conference on dollar crisis, London, 1949.
EA 59/3/209, pt. 1	Visit of Lord Montgomery.
EA 59/3/331, pt. 1	Visit of Eamon de Valera.
EA 59/3/344, pt. 1	Visit of Sir Norman Brook.
EA 59/3/381, pt. 1	Visit of Lord Listowell.
EA 59/3/452, pt. 1	Visit of Patrick Gordon Walker.

EA 81/4/1, pt. 1	New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, Meetings and Agenda 1937-47.
EA 81/4/2A, pt. 4	New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, Minutes of Meetings 1945-47.
EA 81/4/3, pt. 1-6	New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, Papers 1935-47.
EA 81/14/1, pt. 1	New Zealand Council of Defence, 1946-48.
EA 81/14/2, pt. 1	New Zealand Council of Defence, Meetings and Agenda.
EA 81/14/3, pt. 1	New Zealand Council of Defence, Master set of telegrams.
EA 81/14/4, pt. 1	New Zealand Council of Defence, Minutes of Meetings.
EA 81/14/5, pt. 1	New Zealand Council of Defence, Papers.
EA 81/24/1, pt. 1	Caucus Committee on Defence, 1949.
EA 81/24/2, pt. 1	Caucus Committee on Defence, Meetings and Agenda.
EA 81/24/3, pt. 1	Caucus Committee on Defence, Minutes of Meetings.
EA 87/11/2, pt. 1	Recruitment and Training of 2 NZEF Japan.
EA 87/11/4, pt. 1	Directives to Commander of New Zealand land forces, Japan.
EA 87/11/6, pt. 1	Despatch of New Zealand forces to Japan.
EA 87/11/14, pt. 1	Land BCOF Command.
EA 87/11/18, pt. 1-2	Newspaper reports on BCOF.
EA 87/11/20, pt. 1	Reports from Commander-in-Charge J. Force.

EA 87/11/22, pt. 1	JCOSA instructions.
EA 87/11/28, pt. 1	Visit of Journalists, 1947.
EA 87/11/29, pt. 1	Repatriation of J. Force.
EA 87/11/30, pt. 1	Visit of Minister of Defence.
EA 87/11/33, pt. 1	Retention of New Zealand personnel in Japan.
EA 102/9/3, pt. 1	Arrangements for Conference on Japanese Peace Settlement, Canberra, 1947.
EA 102/9/24, pt. 1	Conference on Japanese Peace Settlement, Canberra, 1947.
EA 102/9/25, pt. 1	Documents at Canberra Conference.
EA 102/9/26, pt. 1	Minutes of Canberra Conference.
EA 151/1/1, pt. 3	Commonwealth Affairs, 1947-49.
EA 151/1/4, pt. 1	Status of Great Britain and the Dominions.
EA 151/1/6, pt. 1	Position of Governors-General.
EA 151/1/7, pt. 1	Intra-Commonwealth representation.
EA 151/1/12, pt. 1	Suggestions regarding the development of Commonwealth resources.
EA 151/1/21, pt. 1	Settlement of inter-Commonwealth disputes.
EA 151/15/3, pt. 1	New Zealand Coat of Arms.
EA 151/15/6, pt. 1-2	New Zealand seals, stamps, letterheads.
EA 153/20/6, pt. 1	Prime Ministers' Meeting 1944, Minutes and Speeches.

Bound volume of Minutes and Memoranda of the Commonwealth Meeting, April 1945.

EA 153/23/1, pt. 1	Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1946.
EA 153/23/3, pt. 1	Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1946.
EA 153/23/4, pt. 1	Papers issued at Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1946.
EA 153/23/5, pt. 1	Reports of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1946.
EA 153/23/6, pt. 1	Arrangements at Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1946.
EA 153/23/8, pt. 1	Communiques at Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1946.
EA 153/23/9, pt. 1	Minutes of Special Meeting on Nationality, 1946.
EA 153/25/1, pt. 2	Informal Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, November 1947.
EA 153/26/1, pt. 1-2	Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1948.
EA 153/26/2, pt. 1	Arrangements of New Zealand Delegation at Prime Ministers' Meeting.
EA 153/26/4, pt. 1	Minutes and Papers of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1948.
EA 153/26/5, pt. 1	New Zealand Briefs for Prime Ministers' Meeting.
EA 153/27/1, pt. 1	Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1949.
EA 153/27/3, pt. 1	Master set of Cables at Prime Ministers' Meeting.
EA 153/27/4, pt. 1	Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1949.
EA 153/27/5, pt. 1	Documents issued at Prime Ministers' Meeting, 1949.
EA 153/28/3, pt. 1	Economic Discussions 1949-50.
EA 153/28/5, pt. 1-2	New Zealand Economic Briefs, 1949-50.
EA 153/28/7, pt. 1	Economic Papers.

EA 153/28/9, pt. 1	New Zealand Economic Reports.
EA 153/29/1, pt. 1	Conference on South-East Asia, Canberra 1949.
EA 154/4/1, pt. 2B	Commonwealth Trade 1945-48.
EA 154/4/3, pt. 1B	Commonwealth Economic Committee.
EA 154/4/6, pt. 1B & 2	Commonwealth Tariff Preferences.
EA 154/7/2, pt. 1-2	Sterling Area Monetary and Financial Policy 1947-57.
EA 154/7/3, pt. 1-4	Sterling Area Dollar Deficit 1948-51.
EA 154/7/7, pt. 1	Sterling Area Balance of Payments.
EA 154/11/2, pt. 1	Commonwealth Liaison Committee.
EA 156/1/1, pt. 1-3	Imperial Defence 1946-56.
EA 156/1/7, pt. 1A	Alliances between Military Units of the British Commonwealth.
EA 156/1/15, pt. 1	Services 1946-48.
EA 156/1/18, pt. 1	Cabinet Overseas Defence Committee.
EA 156/2/1, pt. 1A	Pacific Defence 1929-49.
EA 156/2/4/1, pt. 1	ANZAM Area 1949-55.
EA 156/6/1, pt. 1	Committee of Imperial Defence, 1929-49.
EA 156/10/1, pt. 1	Commonwealth Defence Liaison.
EA 156/10/2, pt. 1-2	Australian-New Zealand Defence Cooperation.
EA 157/3/9, pt. 1	Commonwealth Cooperation in Aeronautic Research.
EA 157/3/13, pt. 1	Australian-New Zealand Conference, Wellington 1946.

EA 159/1/1, pt. 1A	General Constitutional Developments.
EA 159/1/5, pt. 1-4	Statute of Westminster.
EA 159/2/1, pt. 1-7	Nationality.
EA 159/2/2, pt. 1	Nationality and Status of Individuals.
EA 159/2/16, pt. 1A	Irish Citizenship.
EA 159/2/25, pt. 1A	Indian Citizenship.
EA 159/4/1, pt. 1	Dominion Legislation.
EA 159/4/3, pt. 1	Use of word 'Foreign'.
EA 159/4/3/3, pt. 2	Change in the Status of Eire.
EA 159/4/3/4, pt. 1	Change in the Status of India.
EA 205/3/4, pt. 7-10	India's Constitutional Status.
EA 207/4/2/1, pt. 5-7	Ireland's Constitutional Status.
T61/3/4/2	Prime Ministers' Meeting 1948.
T61/3/5, pt. 1	Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting July 1949 - Correspondence and Minutes.

2. PUBLISHED

(A) Official Papers

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives.

Australian-American Relations since 1945: A Documentary History, G. St. J. Barclay and J.M. Siracusa (Eds.) (Sydney: Holt, Rhinehart and Wilson, 1976).

Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-1952, Nicholas Mansergh (Ed.), 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1953).

Documents on New Zealand External Relations, vol. I: The Australian-New Zealand Agreement 1944, Robin Kay (Ed.) (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1972).

Documents on New Zealand External Relations, vol. II: The Surrender and Occupation of Japan, Robin Kay (Ed.) (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1982).

New Zealand Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents 1943-1957 (Wellington: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972).

New Zealand Official Year Books 1950 and 1951-52 (Wellington: Government Printer, 1951 and 1952).

New Zealand Parliamentary Debates.

Speeches and Documents on New Zealand History, W. David McIntyre and W.J. Gardner (Eds.) (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1971).

(B) Newspapers and Periodicals

The Dominion

Evening Post

The Press

Round Table

(C) Books and Memoirs

Attlee, Clement R.A., As It Happened (London: Heinemann, 1954).

Attlee, Clement R.A., Empire into Commonwealth (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Evatt, Herbert V., Australia in World Affairs (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1946).

Pearson, Lester B., Memoirs volume II: 1948-1957, The International Years (London: Victor Gollancz, 1974).

SECONDARY

(A) Books and Pamphlets

Ball, Margaret M., The "Open Commonwealth" (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1971).

Bartlett, C.J., The Long Retreat: A Short History of British Defence Policy 1945-1970 (London: MacMillan Press, 1972).

Beaglehole, J.C., McIntosh, A.D., Ross, Angus, Sutch, W.B., Turner, B.R., et al, Contemporary New Zealand: A Survey of Domestic and Foreign Policy (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1938).

Bell, Phillip W., The Sterling Area in the Post-War World (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

British Central Office of Information, Consultation and Co-operation in the Commonwealth (London, 1961).

Brown, Bruce M., New Zealand Foreign Policy in Retrospect 1947-1954 (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1970).

Burnett, Alan and Robert, The Australian and New Zealand Nexus (Canberra: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1980).

Conan, A.R., The Sterling Area (London: MacMillan Press, 1952).

Cowen, Zelman, The British Commonwealth of Nations in a Changing World (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1965).

Currie, A.E., New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster (Wellington: Butterworth, 1944).

Darby, Phillip, British Defence Policy East of Suez 1947-1968 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

Eayrs, James G., In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

Goldsworthy, David, Colonial Issues in British Politics 1945-1951 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

Gordon, Bernard K., New Zealand Becomes a Pacific Power (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

Gordon Walker, Patrick C., The Commonwealth (London: Secker and Warburg, 1962).

Gould, J.D., The Rake's Progress: The New Zealand Economy Since 1945 (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982).

Harvey, Heather J., Consultation and Co-operation in the Commonwealth (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

Holland, R.F., Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance (London: MacMillan Press, 1981).

Judd, David and Slinn, Peter, The Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth 1902-1980 (London: MacMillan Press, 1982).

Kelly, David J., Peter Fraser (Wellington: Reed, 1968).

Kennaway, Richard N., New Zealand Foreign Policy 1951-1971 (Wellington: Hicks Smith, 1972).

Larkin, T.C., New Zealand and Japan in the Post-War World (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1969).

McIntyre, W. David, Colonies into Commonwealth (London: Blandford Press, 1974).

McIntyre, W. David, The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact, 1869-1971 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

McKenzie, Craig, Walter Nash: Pioneer and Prophet (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1975).

Mansergh, Nicholas, The Commonwealth and the Nations (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948).

Mansergh, Nicholas, The Commonwealth Experience (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969).

Mansergh, Nicholas, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of External Policy 1931-1939 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

Mansergh, Nicholas, Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of Wartime Co-operation and Post-war Change 1939-1952 (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

Medlicott, W.N., British Foreign Policy Since Versailles (London: Methuen, 1968).

Millar, T.B., Australia in Peace and War (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978).

Millar, T.B., Australia's Defence (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965).

Millar, T.B., Australia's Foreign Policy (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1968).

Millar, T.B., The Commonwealth and the United Nations (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1967).

Miller, J.D.B., Britain and the Old Dominions (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966).

Mullins, R.M., New Zealand's Defence Policy (Wellington: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972).

Northedge, F.S., Descent From Power: British Foreign Policy 1945-1973 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974).

Olssen, Erik, N., John A. Lee (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1977).

O'Neill, Robert J., Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume I: Strategy and Diplomacy (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1981).

Rajan, M.S., The Post-War Transformation of the Commonwealth (London: Asia Publishing House, 1963).

Reese, Trevor R., Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations 1941-1968 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Sinclair, Keith, A History of New Zealand (London: Allen Lane, 1980).

Sinclair, Keith, Towards Independence (Auckland: Heinemann, 1975).

Sinclair, Keith, Walter Nash (Auckland: Auckland University Press/OUP, 1976).

Thorn, James, Peter Fraser (London: Odhams Press, 1952).

Tunstall, W.C.B., The Commonwealth and Regional Defence (London: Athlone Press, University of London, 1959).

Watt, Alan S., The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938-1965 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

Wheare, K.C., The Constitutional Structure of the Commonwealth (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

Wheare, K.C., The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status (4th edition) (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

Wheeler-Bennett, John W., King George VI: His Life and Reign (London: MacMillan Press, 1958).

Wood, F.L.W., The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs. Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45 (Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1958).

(B) Articles

Beaglehole, J.C., 'The Development of New Zealand Nationality', Journal of World History, 2, 1 (1954).

Beaglehole, J.C., 'The Old Empire and the New' and 'The Statute and Constitutional Change', New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster, J.C. Beaglehole (Ed.) (Wellington: Victoria University College, 1944).

Brecher, Michael, 'India's Decision to Remain in the Commonwealth', Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, 12, 1 (1974).

Carter, Gwendolen, M., 'The Asian Dominions in the Commonwealth', Pacific Affairs, 22, 4 (December 1949).

Carter, Gwendolen, M., 'New Trends in British Commonwealth Relations', Pacific Affairs, 17, 1 (March 1944).

Chapman, Robert, 'From Labour to National', The Oxford History of New Zealand, W.H. Oliver and B.R. Williams (Eds.) (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Conan, A.R., 'The Sterling Area: Success Under Stress', Round Table, 60, 240, (November 1970).

Cunninghame, R.R., 'The Development of New Zealand's Foreign Policy and Political Alignments', New Zealand's External Relations, T.C. Larkin (Ed.) (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962).

Gopal, Sarvepalli, 'Nehru and the Commonwealth', Retreat From Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century, vol. II, David Dilks (Ed.) (London: MacMillan Press, 1981).

Gordon Walker, Patrick, C., 'The British Labour Party and the Commonwealth', Round Table, 60, 240 (November 1970).

Hawke, G.R., 'The Growth of the Economy', The Oxford History of New Zealand, W.H. Oliver and B.R. Williams (Eds.) (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Hodson, H.V., 'The Crown in the Commonwealth', Parliamentary Government in the Commonwealth, S.D. Bailey (Ed.) (London: Hansard Society, 1951).

Jackson, Keith, 'A Hostage to Fortune: New Zealand Foreign Policy 1945-76', Round Table 68, 269 (January 1978).

Laking, George, 'The Evolution of an Independent Foreign Policy', Beyond New Zealand: The Foreign Policy of a Small State, J. Henderson, K. Jackson, R. Kennaway (Eds.) (Auckland: Methuen, 1980).

Lipson, L., 'A Foreign Policy for New Zealand', New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster, J.C. Beaglehole (Ed.) (Wellington: Victoria University College, 1944).

Lough, N.V., 'New Zealand's External Economic Relations', New Zealand's External Relations, T.C. Larkin (Ed.) (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962).

Lyon, Peter, 'Britain and the Commonwealth', Constraints and Adjustments in British Foreign Policy, Michael Leifer (Ed.) (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972).

McGechan, R.O., 'The Statute of Westminster: Legislative Powers of the New Zealand Parliament', New Zealand Law Journal, 20, 2 (1944).

McGechan, R.O., 'Status and Legislative Inability', New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster, J.C. Beaglehole (Ed.) (Wellington: Victoria University College, 1944).

MacGibbon, Ian, C., 'The Defence of New Zealand 1945-1957', New Zealand in World Affairs, vol. I (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1977).

MacGibbon, Ian, C., 'History of New Zealand Defence', New Zealand Foreign Policy and Defence (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1977).

McIntosh, Alister, D., 'Administration of an Independent New Zealand Foreign Policy', New Zealand's External Relations, T.C. Larkin (Ed.) (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962).

McIntosh, Alister, D., 'The Changing and Continuing Commonwealth 1947-63: Some Personal Impressions', The Commonwealth: Its Past, Present and Future (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1973).

McIntosh, Alister, D. 'The Origins of the Department of External Affairs and the Formulation of an Independent Foreign Policy', New Zealand in World Affairs, vol. I (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1977).

McIntosh, Alister, D., 'Working with Peter Fraser in Wartime: Personal Reminiscences', New Zealand Journal of History, 10, 1 (April 1976).

McIntyre, W. David, 'Peter Fraser's Commonwealth: New Zealand and the Origins of the New Commonwealth in the 1940's', New Zealand in World Affairs, vol. I (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1977).

McLeod, A., 'New Zealand, Britain and the Commonwealth - Old Relations have a Future', Round Table, 61 (October 1971).

Mansergh, Nicholas, 'Commonwealth Foreign Policies 1945-56' and 'Commonwealth Membership', Commonwealth Perspectives (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1958).

Mansergh, Nicholas, 'The Implications of Eire's Relationship with the British Commonwealth of Nations', International Affairs (January 1948).

Nash, Walter, 'Parliamentary Government in New Zealand', Parliamentary Government in the Commonwealth, S.D. Bailey (Ed.) (London: Hansard Society, 1951).

Noonan, Rosslyn, 'Peter Fraser' New Zealand's Heritage (Wellington: Paul Hamlyn, 1971-1973).

Oliver, W.H., 'The Awakening Imagination' The Oxford History of New Zealand, W.H. Oliver and B.R. Williams (Eds.) (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Ross, Angus, 'New Zealand and the Commonwealth to 1939', The Commonwealth: Its Past, Present and Future (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1973).

Ross, Angus, 'New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster', The First British Commonwealth: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Mansergh, N. Hillmer and P. Wigley (Eds.) (London: Frank Cass, 1980).

Ross, Angus, 'New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster', New Zealand's Heritage (Wellington: Paul Hamlyn, 1971-1973).

Ross, Angus, 'Reluctant Dominion or Dutiful Daughter? New Zealand and the Commonwealth in the Inter-War Years', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, 10 (1972).

Thomas, Brinley, 'The Evolution of the Sterling Area and its Prospects', Commonwealth Perspectives (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1958).

Wilson, J.V., 'New Zealand's Participation in International Organisations', New Zealand's External Relations, T.C. Larkin (Ed.) (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Public Administration, 1962).

Wilson, Robert, R., 'The Commonwealth and the Law of Nations', Commonwealth Perspectives (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1958).

Wood, F.L.W., 'The Fourth British Empire', New Zealand and the Statute of Westminster J.C. Beaglehole (Ed.) (Wellington: Victoria University College, 1944).

Wood, F.L.W., 'New Zealand Foreign Policy 1945-1951', New Zealand in World Affairs, vol. I (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1977).

Wood, F.L.W., 'Report from New Zealand', Pacific Affairs, 22, 1 (March 1949)

Wood, G.A., 'The Former Dominion of New Zealand', Political Science, 26, 1 (1974).

(C) Unpublished Works

Clemow, C.W.A., 'New Zealand, The Commonwealth and the Korean War' (M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1967).

Eaddy, R.R., 'New Zealand and the Korean War in the First Year' (M.A. thesis, University of Otago, 1983).

Filer, David, J., 'The New Zealand Armed Services: Their Development in Relation to Defence Policy, 1946-1972' (M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1972).

Harland, W.B., 'New Zealand's Security Problem in the Pacific 1939-1951' (M.A. thesis, Victoria University College, 1954).

McKinnon, M.A., 'The Impact of War: A Diplomatic History of New Zealand's Economic Relations with Britain, 1939-1954' (Ph.D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1981).

McLennan, W.R., 'The Last Years of the First Labour Government 1945-49' (M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1963).